Method and Variation

Narrative in Early Modern French Thought

Edited by Emma Gilby and Paul White

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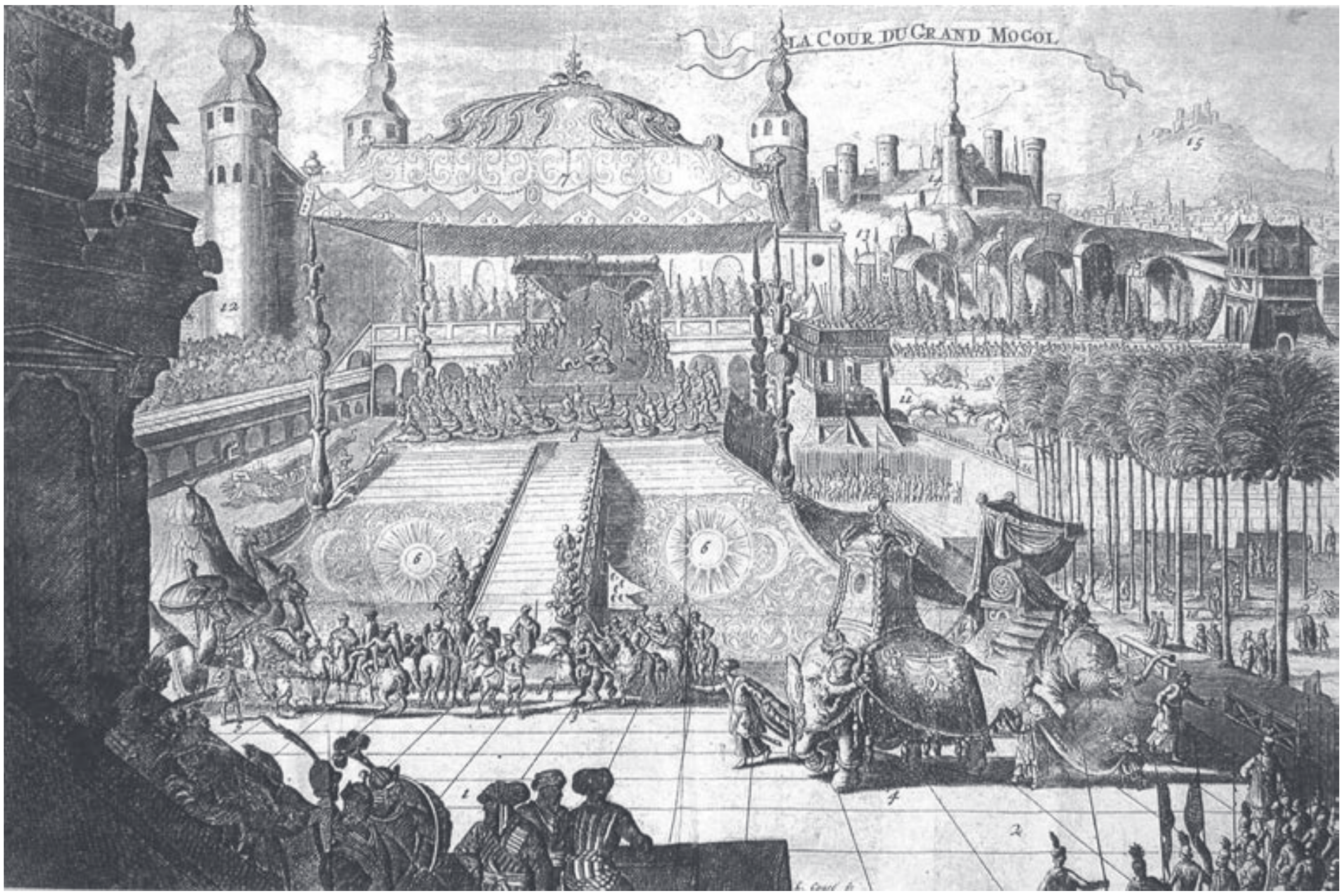

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Paul Maret, *Voyage de Francois Bernier* (1710)

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For Philip

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E.G. & P.W., Cambridge, March 2013

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INTRODUCTION

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Emma Gilby and Paul White

Narrative, broadly understood, is language that tells a story. In the more critical parlance of contemporary narrative theory, narratives are 'intentional-communicative artefacts; intentionally fashioned devices of representation that work by manifesting the communicative intentions of their makers'; they can 'intuitively be distinguished from lists, annals, rambling conversational remarks, instruction manuals'.[1] Narratives are rich in connections and explorations of detail. Narrative is also, therefore, a 'basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change'.[2] The purpose of such a use of language is 'to put human life, causality, and meaning in relation, to make each of them in some degree intelligible in terms of the other two'.[3] This is 'a strategy that contrasts with, but is in no way inferior to, "scientific" modes of explanation that characterize phenomena as instances of general covering laws'.[4]

The narratologists who have attempted to define narrative according to its constituent parts have come up with different categories of basic elements: functions and roles (Propp); actants (Greimas); kernels and satellites (Barthes).[5] All bear a relationship to more traditional notions of character, action, and setting, and to the keywords of Ciceronian rhetorical theory. *Narratio* is, in the oratorical context, 'the statement of facts', following the exordium in the standard division of oratory. In Cicero's *De inventione* and the Pseudo-Ciceronian *Ad Herennium*, *narratio* is defined as an exposition of *res gesta*, things that have happened, or *res ut gesta*, things that might have happened. Cicero and the author of the *Ad Herennium*, working from a common Greek source, divide *narratio* into three *genera*, of which the first two belong to the forensic context, and the third ramifies further into three *partes*: 'true' *historia*, verisimilar *argumentum*, and events which are neither true nor verisimilar: *fabula*.[6] The controversies and contradictions generated by this ambitious partition are many and varied, and are what the present volume seeks to examine. From the start, as Ann Moss points out, the rhetoricians theorizing *narratio* were much less interested in the 'facts in the case' than in 'tactics employed to maximize the likelihood that the story [would] be believed'.[7] *Narratio* will go on to stand at the crossroads of medieval and Renaissance rhetoric and poetics, forcing rhetorical, dialectical and poetic concepts to come together in acute assessments of audience response and the activity of interpretation. In the essays that follow, narrative stands as shorthand for an exploration of the relationship between fable, history and argument in the early modern period, and for an enquiry into corresponding manipulations of fact and fictiveness, literality and metaphor, abstraction and anecdote.

From as early as the twelfth century, commentators of the *De inventione* were pointing out contradictions in Cicero's division of *narratio* into *historia*, *argumentum* and *fabula*. One early reader, quoted by Päivi Mehtonen, proposes a refinement of Cicero's handling of *narratio* as follows:

> Narration is an exposition of things which have occurred; or if they have not actually happened they are narrated as if they had happened — whether they are verisimilar or not. This definition includes properly fabulous narrative as well.[8]

As Mehtonen observes, 'this laconically effective "proof" opens a space for issues to which the following generations of rhetoricians and poeticians would revert' (p. 293).

Such interest in the Ciceronian definitions coincided with the emergence of Latin arts of poetry and the 'discovery' of Aristotle's poetics in the thirteenth century. The medieval commentators enlarged the scope of the *tertium genus narrationis* to encompass theorizations of poetic narrative. In moving freely between the realms of oratory and poetry, the commentators took their cue from Cicero himself, who had used poetic examples to illustrate the theorization of *narratio*. Medieval commentaries on all these texts show us that rhetoric and poetics cooperate in the construction of both the practical and the theoretical grounds of literary narration and representation, with the focus of *narratio* shifting easily from 'persuasion to narration, from civic to personal contexts, and from discourse to literature, including poetry'.[9] To acknowledge this is to move towards the ideal of eloquence that will be put forward by Renaissance humanists: the harmonious union of wisdom and style, aiming at civic virtue, that would stand in contrast to the abstractions of scholasticism.

Medieval theorists paid much closer attention to the third part of the Ciceronian triad, fabulous narrative, than had the ancient texts. But it was particularly in theorizations of its middle part, *argumentum*, that humanist writers found a space to explore and shape the links between narrative and thinking. Their conception of narrative as a means of testing arguments and hypotheses prefigures later uses of narrative forms in philosophical writing. The interlocking of narrative argument and philosophical argument in the early modern period is also visible in the theorists' conflation of *argumentum* as verisimilar narrative with the other meanings of *argumentum*. Jodocus Badius Ascensius, whose commentary edition of the *Ad Herennium* (Paris, 1508) was popular in France in the first third of the sixteenth century, draws together the various meanings of *argumentum*, gleaned from a reading of Quintilian (*Inst. or.* 5.10): *argumentum* means both verisimilar narrative, and 'a process of reasoning which provides proof' ('ratio probationem praestans').[10] The conflation of these two meanings is almost complete in Badius's 1510 edition of Calepino's dictionary, where the definition of *argumentum* in the narrative sense is given not as 'verisimilis narratio', but as 'verisimilis probatio' (sig. F2^{r}). Alongside his own commentary on the *Ad Herennium* Badius printed that of the Italian humanist Francesco Maturanzio, which went much further in 'binding fictive writing to systematic places of argument (*sedes argumentorum*).' Ann Moss observes that Maturanzio 'has systematically woven places of argument as well as the strategies of rhetorical narrative into the patent fictions of poetry and associated story-telling' (p. 203).

To the common medieval view that poetic narrative is meant to 'prove' something,[11] humanists added elaborations on the interconnections between fictional narration and dialectical argumentation. The work of Rudolph Agricola is notable for his rethinking of the relationship between narrative and argument.[12] Petrus Ramus, in turn, reacted against the blurring of the boundaries between the orator's *narratio* and the practice of poets and historians, as in the writing of humanists such as Maturanzio. Ramus wanted to unpick the entanglement of oratorical narration with poetic narration, and he reprehended Quintilian for confusing them. Ramus in his discussions of *narratio* was hardly interested in *argumentum* as the middle part of a threefold classification of narrative: his interest was in argumentation. Against Quintilian, who had mostly excluded argumentation from oratorical *narratio*, Ramus asserted its centrality.[13] In his commentaries on poetic texts, such as Virgil's *Georgics*, Ramus had little to say about narrative, focusing instead on reconstructing chains of argument and identifying tropes and figures.[14] The Ramist course in rhetoric and dialectic included *inventio* from traditional rhetoric, but displaced from their privileged position the traditional parts of a speech, of which *narratio* was the second.[15] Ramus was treating *narratio* and the other parts of a speech in a markedly dialectical fashion: they became, for him, 'simply examples of the second step in judgement, of the "linking of arguments in an unbroken chain" which constitutes an art itself and which will soon be tricked out as full-fledged "method".'[16]

Rhetorical and dialectical treatments of *narratio* made use of the whole arsenal of places of argument, tropes and figures to persuade and prove. The rethinking of the relationship between narration and argument in the work of Agricola and Ramus went together with a rethinking of the role of figurative language in general in truth-seeking discourse: a process that continued, in different ways, throughout what has been termed rhetoric's 'restriction'. Gérard Genette is perhaps the most influential exponent of the idea that, over the course of the early modern period and beyond, 'la rhétorique du *trivium*, écrasée entre grammaire et dialectique, se voit rapidement confinée dans l'étude de l'*elocutio*, des ornements du discours, *colores rhetorici*'.[17] Rhetoric is reduced to 'une étude de la lexis poétique' in a period in which 'Homère et Virgile (et bientôt Racine) supplantent Demosthène et Cicéron' (p. 159). Gilles Declercq summarizes the consequences of this restriction of rhetoric to *elocutio* in *L'Art d'argumenter*:

> Au seuil des Lumières la rhétorique se voit dénier toute vertu heuristique: l'ère des méthodologies scientifiques marque la fin de l'âge de l'éloquence [...] La topique étant discréditée, et la vérité scientifique se fondant désormais sur l'évidence et la démonstration ou sur l'analyse philologique du document, l'argumentation fondée sur le vraisemblable perd toute validité en matière de connaissance.[18]

Such a tendency is given coherent expression, it is said, in Descartes's obsession with clear and distinct ideas, finds parallels in the critique of metaphor in the English-speaking philosophical tradition going back to Hobbes (*Leviathan* I.4), and arrives at a central statement with Locke's disparagement of figurative language as a 'perfect cheat'.[19] We witness here the assumption that 'metaphor is something special and exceptional in the use of language, a deviation from its normal mode of working'.[20] Roland Barthes sees a form of ideological imperialism at work: rhetoric's role is to supervise such deviations, 'les "écarts" du langage passionel', thereby enabling the ruling classes to 's'assurer *la propriété de la parole*'.[21]

Some of the best known responses to this expansion of the terms of narrative theory into broader enquiries about literality and fictiveness are deconstructive: variations on the Derridean goal of exploding 'l'opposition rassurante du métaphorique et du propre'.[22] Paul de Man, in his essay 'The Epistemology of Metaphor', returns to the early modern period to show that Locke's theory of language is shot through with the metaphors he condemns. The figures which are supposedly to be avoided emerge most recalcitrantly of all in those passages where Locke attempts to draw a boundary between the figural and the literal. De Man takes Locke's language back to its own metaphorical sources: an understanding of the word 'idea' as light, for instance (de Man relates 'idea' to the Greek, εἶδος), reveals that the very foundations of Locke's supposedly 'simple ideas' are suggestively figural. Locke slips into metaphor.[23] De Man makes tropes and figures constitutive of language to the extent that they disrupt any effort to communicate clearly. In so doing, he confronts and questions those narratologists who had attempted to construct a 'scientific' conception of narrative as a signifying practice.

In a different reaction to the critical assumptions of the structuralist tradition, Michèle Le Dœuff's close readings of Descartes's imagistic language detail subtle ways in which metaphor can disrupt the philosophical language supposed to order it.[24] Le Dœuff's philosophical priority is to embark on 'la recherche des lignes de tension d'une œuvre' via a study of the moments where 'l'imagerie est solidaire des difficultés, des points douloureux d'une entreprise'.[25] A close reading of the imagery of the texts in question can trouble their ostensible argument. Descartes's imagery, for Le Dœuff, works against the needs of his own philosophy.[26] Such analyses nuance simpler forms of assertion that deductive arguments will never be persuasive unless we enforce them with the arts of eloquence, and that it is correspondingly possible to observe a skilful manipulation of figurative language even in the most rigid espousal of method. It is clearly the case that, even in texts such as Arnauld and Nicole's Cartesian manual of logic, which ostensibly set out to demonstrate logic's imperialist claims in the intellectual arena, we find varying rhetorical practices that refer to themselves as persuasive acts.[27] As Thomas M. Carr puts it, Arnauld and Nicole's theory of accessory ideas accounts 'for the communication of passion, as well as ideas, through language': he is making the point that 'Arnauld and Nicole's desire for an impersonal eloquence of *évidence* where the only ornament is truth itself gives way to modes of proof whose contours resemble the traditional intellectual, emotional, and ethical ones' (p. 85).[28] This Introduction has sought to give a more precise description of the contours of classical and Renaissance theories of *narratio*, as they trouble the basic compartmentalization of manipulative and truth-seeking language. We hope to have suggested, moreover, that the process of arguing on different sides, and subtleties in the understanding of *argumentum* itself, together contest any tendency towards abstraction or the kind of intellectual domination sometimes judged, as in Barthes, to be a defining aspect of the rhetorical tradition.

The essays that follow aim to make a historically sensitive contribution to the study of early modern narrative and the relationship between logical clarity and persuasive pragmatics. We have asked our contributors to examine how the language of verisimilitude, veracity, proof and invention is embedded across genres and media. How do the explorations of fictional texts contribute in significant ways to the terms in which philosophical debates are conducted? How do different kinds of digressive or anecdotal narrative feed back into more abstract analyses? What does it mean to read what we would term 'philosophical' texts in a 'literary' way? How do we best acknowledge that the first intimations of arguments sometimes do not 'fit', can seem counter-intuitive, fabulous? The key explanatory terms of Ciceronian *narratio* open up these issues for subsequent rhetoricians and poeticians and for early modern writing in general.

John O'Brien, first, considers Montaigne's characteristically multi-layered uses of solar imagery to frame a series of reflections on the transcendent and the limits of knowledge. This analysis demonstrates how Montaigne's writing continually shifts and reconfigures the symbolic frameworks within which it operates. Montaigne's sceptical exploration of philosophical debates about the sun and sun worship traces erratic trajectories. It complicates the relationship between sensibilia and intelligibilia, between the seen and the unseen, between the known and the unknown. It moves from a consideration of the status and meaning of the sun in the philosophical discourse, to an evaluation of the very processes, implications and results of philosophical enquiry itself. What emerges is 'a picture of philosophical investigation *per se*, disputatious but vital, wayward but engaged, restless and sometimes ridiculous but steadfastly refusing to take the *poncif* as a substitute for thought' (p. 15).

As the sixteenth century turned into the seventeenth, philosophical and religious controversies saw thinkers in various domains struggling with one another to gain control of ideas: appropriating traditional narratives and images was one of the ways that writers could articulate their theoretical positions and assert the superiority of their methods. The articles by Rowan Tomlinson and Anthony Ossa-Richardson ask what was at stake in such disputes, taking as their examples case studies from the domains of enquiry into nature and religious polemic respectively.

Rowan Tomlinson surveys sixteenth-century French narratives of the death of the Roman natural historian Pliny the Elder. The story of Pliny's death during the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 appealed to early modern philosophers and scientists as a case illustrative of key methodological issues relating to the investigation of the natural world, and prompted a range of treatments. Writers with different motivations chose either to foreground or suppress particular aspects of the story, and used the narrative to validate their favoured epistemological approaches. The later sixteenth century saw practitioners of *historia* — notably François de Belleforest and André Thevet — engage in debates about the relative value of written authority versus first-hand empirical investigation. Their versions of the story of Pliny's death served to articulate and legitimize their particular methodological positions, but ultimately relied on anecdote, 'a form of narration less concerned with the establishment of the truth about the particulars of a subject than, as Thevet puts it in the front matter of his *Vrais pourtraits*, with managing to 'ouvrir l'appetit' of the reader' (p. 37).

The piece by **Anthony Ossa-Richardson**, 'Image and Idolatry: The Case of Louis Richeome', illustrates the susceptibility of narrative and metaphor to being reinterpreted and redeployed to very different — indeed, mutually opposed — ends. It looks at some of the ways in which the language and imagery of idolatry were appropriated by French writers entering the fray of the religious controversies of the early seventeenth century. The Jesuit Louis Richeome, in his *Idolatrie huguenote* (1608), sought to 'trope a sustained critique of Calvinist doctrine' by aligning it with a narrative of pagan idolatry. His Huguenot opponent Jean Bansilion responded by attempting to turn Richeome's own weapons against him. Writers on each side were seeking to wrest control of the imagery deployed by the other, and in so doing assert the validity of their interpretations. Ossa-Richardson's reading of these exchanges shows that underpinning the specific doctrinal issues at stake in such disputes was a wider philosophical problem of meaning: 'Reform, textual as well as ecclesiastical, thus brought with it a crisis of meaning, a new border dispute between literal and figurative expression in religious matters' (p. 51).

The focal point of **Alexander Roose**'s piece, 'The Book of Nature and the Book of Metaphors', is the frontispiece of Emanuele Tesauro's *Il Cannocchiale aristotelico* (1654), in which Aristotle helps a young woman, 'Poesia', to observe the sun. Moving from a generalized discussion of the art of rhetoric to the metaphor as 'mother of poetry', Tesauro reworks Aristotelian reflections on similarity and difference, encouraging writers to use unusual metaphors that stretch dissimilarity to its logical limits in order to produce surprise and wonder in the reader. Tesauro is moving away from the traditional methods of *inventio*, of finding arguments, of relying on the conventional topical method to organize consistent reasoning. Situating his discussion in the context of wider early modern work on metaphorical thinking, Roose compares and contrasts ways of reading the 'book of the world' in Montaigne, Descartes and Pascal.

The texts examined by **Michael Moriarty** converge in their use of anecdote and diverge in the affective responses they generate through it. More than illustrations of the theory they punctuate, these anecdotes also work to modulate the reader's relationship to the theory in question. The universal logic to which La Rochefoucauld aspires in his *Maximes*, for example, is circumscribed by his own gentlemanly world-view, as displayed obliquely in his anecdote concerning Cato, Brutus and a dancing lackey. La Rochefoucauld's supposed levelling out of the men through their common anxiety about death is modified by embedded references to the superior attitudes of the noblemen. Throughout, anecdotes that involve death, disgrace, 'bodies tortured, dismembered, disfigured, or out of control' (p. 76), are analysed in terms of the compassion or humour they are able to generate, and these responses are set against the intellectual abstractions of their source material.

Katherine Ibbett looks at Madame de Villedieu's experiments at the intersection of the historical chronicle, the maxim, and the *nouvelle*. Villedieu's 'diverses intrigues' (p. 82) are set against Pierre Bayle's claims that she ushered in 'une licence, dont on abuse tous les jours de plus en plus; c'est celle de prêter ses inventions, et ses intrigues galantes, aux plus grands hommes des derniers siècles, et de les mêler avec des faits qui ont quelque fondement dans l'Histoire.'[29] Ibbett notes that *Les*

Désordres de l'amour offers a kind of discourse that has gone largely unremarked in critical literature on the topic: it is presented as a series of theorems that the author attempts to prove in demonstrative fashion: 'Que l'amour est le ressort de toutes les autres passions de l'âme,' 'Qu'on ne peut donner si peu de puissance à l'amour qu'il n'en abuse,' 'Qu'il n'y a point de desespoir, où l'amour ne soit capable de jetter un homme bien amoureux.' Considering the various registers of the language of proof in 1675, Ibbett asks what the *nouvelle* — or novelist — might gain from taking them on. What kind of status is claimed for fiction when it proceeds according to the language of proposition and proof? Going beyond previous discussions of Villedieu in relation to community-minded 'galant' discourse, Ibbett suggests that Villedieu's deployment of the vocabulary of proof is concerned with the establishment of her own personal authority.

The novelist's mobilization of languages of proof imported from the philosophical discourse has its counterpart in seventeenth-century philosophers' borrowings from the novelist's repertoire. **Isabelle Moreau** considers the ways in which François Bernier, French translator of Gassendi, made use of narrative techniques — fiction, anecdote, constructed dialogue — to validate his empirical approach. Moreau explores points of overlap between two apparently heterogeneous works written by Bernier: the epistolary travel account that was the *Voyages* (1670–71), and the seven-volume philosophical treatise *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi* (1674–84). Together they present an authorial *ethos* whereby 'travel is fully integrated with sceptical experience', intended as an antidote to the kind of presumptive knowledge represented, in Bernier's view, by Descartes: Bernier's aim is to replace speculation and systematization with 'experimental discourse and the experience of the practical investigator' (p. 92). But despite Bernier's explicit rejection of the 'fictions' of philosophers (a term which for him signifies 'a hypothesis in a degraded state', detached from real-life experience), his own discourse necessarily relies on and is conditioned by the processes and constructions of fictional writing.

Finally, in 'Language, Image and the Double', **John D. Lyons** considers discourse and image as *doppelgänger*, or 'rival systems of signs that attempt to convey information about the same objects and interfere with one another to produce conflicts, distortions and enigmas' (p. 103). He looks at the common-sensical clarity of voice and presence as a kind of evidence, but also at how the world of Lafayette's novel shows these qualities to be inseparable from more ambiguous written and graphic representations. Lyons's test case is Mme de Lafayette's *Zayde* (1670). The central complication of the plot arises from the practice of individual portrait painting. Lyons analyses the split between the visual content of a painting and what he terms its semiological uses, or 'image-acts', which flourish uncontrollably as soon as the painting is put into circulation. The fictional hero's belief or delusion that he himself has a double catalyses, in this reading, a fascinating exploration of theoretical self-presence and actual appearance, substantial beings and accidental qualities, and the difficulty in ever seeing properly eye to eye.

The articles in this volume, with their 'diverses intrigues', all treat in various ways the renegotiations and reconfigurations of narrative's relationship to thought, argument and proof. All are situated in 'the strange interregnum between

Aristotelian poetics and modern fiction.'[30] Throughout, notions of veracity and verisimilitude exist on a sliding scale, disturbing binary oppositions.[31] Intellectual abstractions can interact unpredictably with more wayward forms of expression. Even the most firmly expressed preferences for consistency, clarity and rigidity of method accompany the awareness that readers' thought processes may be resistant to such qualities. In all the chapters that follow, theoretical statements about patterns of belief also address the failure of those patterns. We hope to have added to critical understanding of the complex articulation of fable, history and argument in the early modern period.

Notes to the Introduction

1. Greg Currie, *Narratives and Narrators* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. xvii.
2. *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. by David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 3.
3. Marilynne Robinson, *When I Was a Child I Read Books* (London: Virago, 2012), p. 11.
4. *Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, p. 3.
5. The term 'narratology' was coined by Tzvetan Todorov, referring to the discipline conceived as a science of narrative based on Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics. Saussurean linguistics privileged *la langue*, or language as system, over *la parole*, or individual utterances, and focused on an overarching semiotic framework for language described in terms of its structural constituents and combinatorial principles. In the same way, the narratologists privileged the study of narrative in general over the interpretation of individual utterances. Genette, for instance, in his three-volume *Figures* (Paris: Seuil, 1966, 1969 and 1972), drew on the traditional grammatical concepts of tense, mood, and voice to investigate types of temporal sequence and manipulations of viewpoint. See Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. by Lawrence Scott (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958); A. J. Greimas, *On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory*, trans. by Paul Perron and Frank Collins (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1978); Barthes, 'Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits', *Communications*, 8 (1966), 1–27 (this also includes contributions by Greimas, Todorov and Genette); for secondary criticism, see Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London: Routledge, 1975), and David Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).
6. 'narratio est rerum gestarum aut ut gestarum expositio', *De inv.* 1.19.27; *AH* 1.3.4 and 1.8.13; *Inst. Or.* 2.4.2.
7. Ann Moss, *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 201.
8. Quoted in Päivi Mehtonen, 'Poetics, Narration and Imitation: Rhetoric as *Ars Applicabilis*', in *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, ed. by Virginia Cox and John O. Ward (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2006), pp. 289–312 (p. 293).
9. George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric in its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), p. 3. On the poetological appropriation of *narratio*, see also Päivi Mehtonen, *Old Concepts and New Poetics: Historia, Argumentum and Fabula in the Twelfth- and Early Thirteenth-century Latin Poetics of Fiction* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1996).
10. The other meanings of *argumentum* include: the theme of an oration; any subject for writing; and a poetic composition. Badius considered compositions of the *argumentum* type particularly well suited to the teaching of lessons and rules (Terence *Praenotamenta* (Lyon, 1511), sig. a.iiii). See Chapter 8 'Morals and Letters' in Paul White, *Jodocus Badius Ascensius: Commentary, Commerce and Print in the Renaissance* (forthcoming in 2013).
11. There is a similar conflation in Isidore: see Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), pp. 452–53.

12. Peter Mack, *History of Renaissance Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 56, 68; and *Renaissance Argument* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), pp. 190–201, 198.
13. 'nulla Ciceronis narratio est, ubi non et argumenta rerum, et rationes ponantur, ubi non etiam syllogismi et argumentationes adhibeantur' (*Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian: Translation and Text of Peter Ramus's 'Rhetoricae distinctiones in Quintilianum'*, ed. by James J. Murphy, trans. by Carole Newlands (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986; repr. 2010), p. 194).
14. Mack, *History*, p. 152.
15. Mack, p. 150, Note also Mack's reassessment of the common claim that Ramus 'reduced rhetoric to style and delivery' (pp. 142–45): Ramist teaching necessitated study of rhetoric and dialectic together.
16. Walter Ong, *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA: H.U.P, 1958; repr. 2004), p. 211.
17. Gérard Genette, 'La Rhétorique restreinte', *Communications*, 16 (1970), 158–71 (p. 159).
18. Gilles Declercq, *L'Art d'argumenter: Structures rhétoriques et littéraires* (Paris: Editions universitaires, 1993), p. 165.
19. 'All the artificial and figurative application of Words Eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong *Ideas*, move the Passions, and thereby mislead the Judgement; and so indeed are perfect cheats.' Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), III, X, 34 (p. 508).
20. I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 90.
21. Roland Barthes, 'L'Ancienne Rhétorique', in *Recherches rhétoriques*, special issue of *Communications*, 16 (1970), 172–223 (p. 173).
22. Jacques Derrida, 'La Mythologie blanche: La Métaphore dans le texte philosophique', in *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), pp. 247–324 (p. 323).
23. On this, see Brian Cummings, 'Literally Speaking, or, the Literal Sense from Augustine to Lacan', *Paragraph*, 21 (1998), 200–26.
24. Michèle Le Dœuff , *L'Imaginaire philosophique* (Paris: Payot, 1980), pp. 85–132.
25. Le Dœuff, 'Préface: La Face honteuse de la philosophie', in *L'Imaginaire philosophique*, pp. 9–33 (p. 11).
26. The 'Lettre-préface' to the French edition of Descartes's *Principes*, for instance, offers the judgement that moral certainty is, in effect, a contradiction in terms, to be opposed to the sought-after metaphysical certainty or a 'certitude plus que morale'. And yet the image of the tree of knowledge in the 'Lettre-préface', with morality as one of the branches emerging from philosophy's trunk, offers a 'rêve de morale produite par la philosophie': morality as an end point. Descartes, 'Lettre-préface de l'édition française des Principes de la philosophie', in *Œuvres philosophiques*, ed. by Ferdinand Alquié, 3 vols (Paris: Garnier, 1963–73), III, 769–85 (p. 780). On this, see Emma Gilby, 'Descartes's "Morale par provision": A Re-evaluation', *French Studies*, 65.4 (2011), 444–58. See also Fernand Hallyn's *Descartes: Ironie et dissimulation* (Geneva: Droz, 2006), which is interested in a more sustained engagement with narrative technique in Descartes. Hallyn states that Descartes uses the tools of irony and dissimulation to mask the more unpalatable or difficult aspects of his writing; in this way, Hallyn extends the argument of Pierre Cavaillé, in *La Fable du Monde* (Paris: Vrin, 1991), to Descartes's non-scientific writings.
27. Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, *La Logique ou l'art de penser,* ed. by Charles Jourdain (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), p. 31.
28. Thomas M. Carr, *Descartes and the Resilience of Rhetoric* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), pp. 87, 85.
29. Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Rotterdam, 1697), entry for Mlle DESJARDINS.
30. Nicholas D. Paige: *Before Fiction: The Ancien Regime of the Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. x. Paige offers an overview of the attested content of fictional forms as inherited from Aristotle: how 'the poet adds his inventions to the renowned heroes and events of history so as to make a good plot'. In contrast, by 1670, and until roughly the turn of the nineteenth century, 'pseudofactual' stories 'pretend to offer their readers real documents ripped straight from history — found manuscripts, entrusted correspondence, true stories and all

the rest' (p. x). See also *Fiction and the Frontiers of Knowledge in Europe, 1500–1800*, ed. by Richard Scholar and Alexis Tadié (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

31. 'By "fiction", I mean something better though more awkwardly captured by the substantive "fictionality"' Paige, *Before Fiction*, p. ix. 'I don't seek to define narrative, choosing to focus instead on the graded notion of *narrativity*.' Currie, *Narratives and Narrators*, p. xvii.

CHAPTER 1

Sun Worshippers

John O'Brien

As an analogy for thinking about the transcendent, the image and motif of the sun has wide currency in the Renaissance and covers a variety of spheres: erotic and religious are two of the most common, sometimes in combination, and hardly need extensive illustration here, either individually or collectively. One instance — one of the most emblematic and superlative — will suffice: the closing passage of D'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques* which conveniently encapsulates all the elements of the solar theme in its religious dimension:

> Chetif je ne puis approcher de mon œil
> L'œil du ciel, je ne puis supporter le soleil,
> Encor tout esblouy en raisons je me fonde
> Pour de mon ame voir la grand'ame du monde,
> Sçavoir ce qu'on ne sçait, et qu'on ne peut sçavoir,
> Ce que n'a ouy l'oreille, et que l'œil n'a peû voir:
> Mes sens n'ont plus de sens, l'esprit de moy s'envolle,
> Le cœur ravy se taist, ma bouche est sans parolle:
> Tout meurt, l'ame s'enfuit, et reprenant son lieu
> Extaticque se pasme au giron de son Dieu.[1]

Annihilation which is paradoxically union, transfiguration through overwhelming light, the lexicon of ravishment, ecstasy and swooning, supported by references to St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: among this swarm of ideas, the implicit assimilation of the sun to God passes unnoticed and to be a sun worshipper in this context is uncontroversial precisely because the relationship of this metaphorical signifier to its signified is perceived as natural, fully motivated by the theological tradition to which it belongs. The sheerly physical presence of the sun imposes itself as the object of choice for centralizing and fixing meaning, as Carl Havelange illustrates in his study *De l'œil et du monde*;[2] and D'Aubigné's power lies precisely in his ability to shape an inherited, shared language to his own ends.

Montaigne's *Essais* contain their own fair share of sun worshippers, from the topos of heliotropic elephants (according to 2.12)[3] to an Indian tribe in which 'il y a cette loüable observance: quand il leur mes-advient en quelque rencontre ou bataille, ils en demandent publiquement pardon au Soleil, qui est leur Dieu, comme d'une action injuste, raportant leur heur ou malheur à la raison divine et luy submettant leur Jugement et discours' (1.32, pp. 215–16). This last example forms part one of the essayist's most uncompromising statements about the question of the absolute, as the chapter title already indicates: 'Qu'il faut sobrement se mesler de juger des ordonnances divines'.[4] The statement about the Indians, with its approving tone,[5] was added between 1582 and 1588 and placed near the beginning of the chapter; its emphasis is on their acceptance of good and ill and their submission to divine reason; Montaigne does not use the example to focus on the rationale behind taking the sun as a god or to query the fusing of the material with the immaterial. The passage then continues:

> Suffit à un Chrestien croire toutes choses venir de Dieu, les recevoir avec reconnoissance de sa divine et inscrutable sapience, pourtant les prendre en bonne part, en quelque visage qu'elles luy soient envoyées. Mais je trouve mauvais ce que je voy en usage, de chercher à fermir et appuyer nostre religion par le bon-heur et prosperité de nos entreprises. (p. 216)

The parallel is implicitly, but tightly, drawn, and starkly set out: just as the Indian tribe accepted what came from their god, so too should the Christian. It is one of the numerous examples in the *Essais* of the ways in which the New Worlds of Renaissance voyages of discovery can teach the Old World, by reversing Western assumptions then held about European superiority.[6] The extract then passes to one of the main points of the chapter ('Mais je trouve mauvais...'), with specific examples taken from contemporary events: the battle of Lepanto (1571), and the earlier trio of battles at La Roche-L'Abeille, Jarnac and Montcontour, all fought during 1569. In each case, Montaigne rejects any intrinsic link between contingent events and divine favour or disfavour and his thinking about the absolute takes on typically extreme, absolute forms, arguing for a total dissociation between event and meaning; almost arguing indeed for the absence of any discoverable pattern or meaning in events. In seeking to dispel the popular view that victory in war is a sign of divine approval and defeat the converse, he does so in the name of truth, not of Sceptical suspension: 'il vaudroit mieux l'entretenir [=le peuple] des vrays fondemens de la verité', he asserts (p. 216), in the interests of breaking the link between religious faith and its dependence on presumed signs of divine activity in the political sphere. And in so doing, Montaigne's attitude increasingly runs counter to the expectations set up by his contemporaries.

No less uncompromising is the end of this short chapter which reintroduces the sun motif, thus framing the whole, echoing the earlier instance and acting as a coda to the essayist's reflections:

> Il se faut contenter de la lumiere qu'il plait au Soleil nous communiquer par ses rayons; et, qui eslevera ses yeux pour en prendre une plus grande dans son corps mesme, qu'il ne trouve pas estrange si, pour la peine de son outrecuidance, il y perd la veüe. *Quis hominum potest scire consilium dei? aut quis poterit cogitare quid velit dominus?* (pp. 216–17)

By suggestive juxtaposition rather than formal correlation, the material phenomenon of the sun is set alongside divinity by means of the concluding quotation, from Wisdom 9:13, offering an implicit rejoinder to those who, like D'Aubigné in our opening extract, aspire to the transfiguration of vision through light and find in solar ecstasy the apocalyptic acme of Scripture. At this final stage of Montaigne's reflections, the sun now stands for a limit that brings blindness, not illumination, in its wake.[7] In this instance, and others of a related type, the truth is placed out of reach, in excess of human comprehension, unknowable except in so far as light comes down,[8] and ungraspable by the finitude of human reason; as the term 'outrecuidance' underlines, any such attempt to probe the unknowable is deemed a moral as well as an intellectual failing. And yet, paradoxically, the problem of the meaning of the sun continues to preoccupy Montaigne. It involves the questions of what it means to take the sun to be a god; what appearances signify; and how we symbolize the absolute as well as whether it is an absolute.

When the essayist returns to the same set of heliocentric issues at key moments in the 'Apologie', he does so through a sequence of passages which mediate these themes through Socrates and his contemporaries and predecessors. The first passage in question — I shall call it 'the *œil du monde* section' (pp. 514–16) — has already benefited from the critical attention of Terence Cave.[9] I return to it here in order to extend the analysis in a rather different direction, but one that is initially indebted to Cave's insight that the episode foregrounds a counterfactual Montaigne, one who delights in alternative lives, the 'might have been', the 'what if', indicated here by his use of conditionals and hypotheticals. This, I shall be suggesting, is Montaigne in one of his many optative moods, flexing his speculative powers (and, crucially, allowing others to do so) in such a way as to make a difference to the conceptual framework he shares with his contemporaries. That concern with speculation and speculative schemes is, I shall also argue, another feature of Montaigne's overall approach to solar imagery that sets him apart from his compatriots.

The section of the 'Apologie' in which the *œil du monde* quotation appears is prepared by two preceding passages in the same chapter. The first is a 1588 insertion in the midst of a passage that originally appeared in 1580:

> Car ce monde est un temple tressainct, dedans lequel l'homme est introduict pour y contempler des statues, non ouvrées de mortelle main, mais celles que la divine pensée a faict sensibles: le Soleil, les estoilles, les eaux et la terre, pour nous representer les intelligibles. (p. 447)

And then a few pages later:

> Dirons nous que nous n'avons veu en nulle autre creature qu'en l'homme l'usage d'une ame raisonable? Et quoy! avons nous veu quelque chose semblable au soleil? Laisse il d'estre, par ce que nous n'avons rien veu de semblable? et ses mouvemens d'estre, par ce qu'il n'en est point de pareils? Si ce que nous n'avons pas veu, n'est pas, nostre science est merveilleusement raccourcie [...]. (p. 452)

These quotations might act as a twofold focus for the extract that is of interest to us. In the first of them, the relationship underscored is between sensibilia and intelligibilia; in the second, it is between the seen and the unseen, which overlaps with the known and the unknown. The *œil du monde* passage is consistent with both these emphases. In its 1580 form, it deals with the ineffability of God and his unrepresentability, but also with his magnanimity 'prenant en bonne part l'honneur et la reverence que les humains luy rendoient soubs quelque visage, sous quelque nom et en quelque maniere que ce fut' (p. 513). It is in this context that the essayist imagines himself as a sun worshipper and that hypothetical tense introducing an alternative world — 'je me fusse [...] plus volontiers attaché' (p. 514) — is reflected a little later in a parallel use of the same topic, 'J'eusse encore plustost suivy ceux qui adoroient le serpent, le chien et le bœuf' (p. 516). The reason is stated plainly: 'Les choses les plus ignorées sont plus propres à estre deifiées' (p. 516), in contrast with the anthropomorphic view of deity which, whether in its classical or Christian form, Montaigne regards as a vain attempt to 'ramener Dieu à [nostre] mesure' (p. 528) (a crucial concept in his thinking about this issue).[10] The whole argument at the earliest stage hinges on a particular interpretation of St Paul and the altar of the Unknown God in Athens (Acts 17. 23), cited immediately before the *œil du monde* section in 1580 (p. 513). The point about the sun, Montaigne tells us, is that it too is 'si peu connu' and is thus, in another dispensation, worthy of worship along with the various animals he lists.

Even as it stands in 1580, this line of argument offers an unexpected development of the core idea, and especially of the Pauline notion that supports it, leading to a rejection of 'le transport des sens' that characterizes D'Aubigné's approach to ecstasy: 'Quand tous mes cinq sens de nature seroient combles de liesse, et cette ame saisie de tout le contentement qu'elle peut desirer et esperer, nous sçavons ce qu'elle peut: cela, ce ne seroit encores rien' (p. 518) and concluding with a specific re-assertion of the original premise that reverses its terms: 'Nous ne pouvons dignement concevoir la grandeur de ces hautes et divines promesses, si nous les pouvons aucunement concevoir: pour dignement les imaginer, il faut les imaginer inimaginables, indicibles et incomprehensibles [...]' (p. 518). Thus while Montaigne maintains at the first stage of the argument that sensibles are given for intelligibles, at its final stage he takes away even that support and supplies an implicit rejoinder to writers who use the senses as correlative to experience or even to its attempted conceptualization.

The unusual design of Montaigne's thinking and approach needs underscoring and it is only intensified by the re-working of the *œil du monde* sequence after 1588, through an extensive 'alongeail' that deepens the sense of an alternative world and constitutes one of Montaigne's numerous arguments by lists. This very fact has attracted the attention of Bernard Sève, who in *De haut en bas: Philosophie des listes* devotes a whole chapter to their use in Montaigne. He notes their sceptical and ironic purpose and, while he does not directly deal with the one of interest to us, Montaigne's scathing comments at the close of the list might only serve to confirm Sève's view about their ironical objective: 'Fiez vous à vostre philosophie; vantez vous d'avoir trouvé la feve au gasteau, à voir ce tintamarre de tant de cervelles philosophiques!' (p. 516). Such a list falls into what Sève terms 'la catégorie au fond la plus classique, celles des "listes d'opinions dogmatiques disparates", dont le seul énoncé vaut condamnation: conflit des experts, des doctes, des savants'.[11]

One reason not to close off consideration of the 'alongeail' at this point is that dismissal of it takes at face value the statements which the essayist voices at the close of the (C) passage. It might arguably be preferable to see such statements in another light; their frequency in these contexts is usually a marker of a twofold momentum: on the one hand, the opening up of a speculative space, with its accompanying activity, and on the other 'un retrait critique par rapport aux pensées et à leur énonciation'[12] that highlights the operation of judgement, validating and endorsing the speculation or directing doubt or mockery at it. The launching of an investigation and doubts about its validity, or at the very least about its lasting value, are two sides of the same coin; and this is entirely consistent with the whole problematics of licence and limits, confines and exploration, boundaries and flights of imagination that are replayed so often and so variously in the 'Apologie'. The concluding glosses are frequently taken as 'ex cathedra', once-and-for-all interventions from the person of the writer rather than — as may seem preferable — recognizable moves in an argument which juxtaposes, in this case, conjecture with reservations about conjecture. This move on Montaigne's part functions, therefore, rather as the symbolic framework for the passage, highlighting issues of appropriation versus disavowal, and constraint versus freedom of thought.

There is good reason, then, one might think, for not dismissing this (C) addition so quickly. In particular, by way of an extensive paragraph lifted from Cicero's *De natura deorum*, it introduces a compendious history of Greek philosophy in a sustained speculation about the nature of divinity and the sun that convokes all the leading figures and Schools from the Pre-Socratics to Epicurus.[13] The easy connection that Montaigne's contemporaries standardly make between the Son and the sun is already present in the musings of the Greeks; the essayist notes that 'Alcmæon a donné la divinité au soleil' (p. 515), Parmenides thinks of God as a circle 'maintenant le monde par l'ardeur de la lumiere' (ibid.), Aristotle, at one point, 'faict Dieu l'ardeur du ciel' (ibid.) and Cleanthes likewise thinks of God as 'la chaleur supreme entourant et envelopant tout' (ibid.). But the most striking instance of all in this regard comes at a moment when Xenophon is mentioned, after Plato and before Aristotle:

> Xenophon rapporte un pareil trouble de la discipline de Socrates: tantost qu'il ne se faut enquerir de la forme de Dieu, et puis il luy faict establir que le Soleil est Dieu, et l'ame Dieu; qu'il n'y en a qu'un, et puis qu'il y en a plusieurs. (p. 515)

This sentence serves to underscore that we are dealing not with the Platonic Socrates, the exponent of the world of Ideas, but an altogether earthier, less sublime figure, a dispenser of practical wisdom as he appears in the *Memorabilia* and who emerges here as fluctuating in opinion and as irresolute 'en ses fantasies' as Theophrastus later in this extract.

This brief vignette of Socrates is crucial to the point Montaigne is making here, for the Greek philosopher embodies in this 'alongeail' the very principle of contradiction that is the sign of the *essai* because it is the sign of enquiry itself. Contradiction is not on this view a synonym for confusion, but a mark of provisionality, of openness to disagreement and revision. Nor likewise is enquiry the continuous unfolding of an organic argument, with a clear beginning, middle and end, but rather a series of new hypotheses, fresh starts developing in unpredictable directions, never settling into a single mould or regular pattern. The same principle holds true for this whole passage: it is a picture of philosophical investigation *per se*, disputatious but vital, wayward but engaged, restless and sometimes ridiculous but steadfastly refusing to take the *poncif* as a substitute for thought. And Montaigne, in a fast-moving, sweeping list, recreates that world for us, a world that is by nature σκεπτικός in its ordinary sense of 'reflective', 'thoughtful'.

This *mise en abyme* of philosophical activity with its multiple pathways is also σκεπτικός in a more specific way.[14] All the philosophers mentioned are in pursuit of an answer to a set of implicit but never openly articulated questions: what is the phenomenon? What does it signify? Can physical phenomena be indicative of metaphysics? Can sensibilia serve as intelligibilia? Is it right to think of God as a spirit acting in and upon nature, as do Thales, Anaxagoras, Pythagoras and Aristotle in one of his guises? Or should nature itself be deified — should the sun, for instance, be worshipped? — following the opinion of Alcmæon, Empedocles, Plato in his *Laws*, Theophrastus and Strato? Are the Stoics perhaps correct in identifying God with natural law or reason? Or Epicurus in endowing his gods with human features but making them heedless of human affairs? Bernard Sève coins the expression 'douter en liste' to describe Montaigne's attitude towards the lists he compiles.[15] The inhabitants of such lists are thus cast for Sève in a passive role, as the objects of Montaigne's scorn or the instruments of his irony. Yet it may seem from the present example that the inhabitants can undertake a more active role also: they too are doubters in a broadly Sceptical vein, at least as the Renaissance came to understand that notion of doubt.[16] Montaigne is indeed quite explicit about this fact, certainly in respect of some of the thinkers he names: 'comme les anciens ont remarqué des escripts d'Anaxagoras, Democritus, Parmenides, Zenophanes et autres. Ils ont une forme d'escrire douteuse en substance et un dessein enquerant plustost qu'instruisant, encore qu'ils entresement leur stile de cadances dogmatistes' (p. 509) — a characteristic he sees them as sharing with Seneca and Plutarch (ibid.).[17] From the Ionian and Pythagorean Schools down to the Stoics and Epicureans, they all speculate about the nature of phenomena, in some cases following appearances and accepting what appears as the source of value, and so conflating physics and metaphysics, in other cases believing that contingent objects such as the sun do not have a fixed but an assigned value, and so separating physics and metaphysics. Montaigne's own wayward 'solution' to this problem, at this point and in this context, is to dismantle the binary structure of what appears and what is disclosed by refusing to supply the second half of the binary, and thus failing to confirm whether disclosure can occur within appearance philosophically and implicitly denying that revelation could be deduced from appearances theologically. Yet it has to be remembered that the position is always re-narratable: at the close of 1.32, we recall, Montaigne had simply insisted, 'il se faut contenter de la lumiere qu'il plait au Soleil nous communiquer par ses rayons; et, qui eslevera ses yeux pour en prendre une plus grande dans son corps mesme, qu'il ne trouve pas estrange si, pour la peine de son outrecuidance, il y perd la veüe' (pp. 216–17). In all instances, the phenomenon continues nevertheless to appear, and to pose the problem of the meaning of its appearing.

Montaigne has far from finished with Socrates and the Pre-Socratics and the solar theme. At a later point in 2.12, he picks up his train of thought about speculation by writing a further episode in the history of philosophical enquiry. 'Les yeux humains ne peuvent apercevoir les choses que par les formes de leur cognoissance', he begins

(p. 535), before moving on to specific instances:

> Si vous demandez à la philosophie de quelle matiere est le ciel et le Soleil, que vous respondra elle, sinon de fer ou, avecq Anaxagoras, de pierre, et telle estoffe de nostre usage? S'enquiert on à Zenon que c'est que nature? Un feu, dict-il, artiste, propre à engendrer, procedant regleement. Archimedes, maistre de cette science qui s'attribue la presseance sur toutes les autres en verité et certitude: Le Soleil, dict-il, est un Dieu de fer enflammé. (p. 535)

In this instance, the process of constructing analogies is what comes under Montaigne's scrutiny, of making the superlunar world a version of our own, although he passes over Anaxagoras's denial of divinity to the sun. His comments are written against the backdrop of references to book 4 of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, beginning with the criticism of Anaxagoras. Montaigne's passing reference to Anaxagoras and his identification of the sun with a stone is an abbreviated version of the original:

> Quand le mesme Anaxagore disoit que le soleil estoit vne pierre ardante, il ne se souuenoit pas de ce qu'vne pierre estant dans le feu n'a nulle lueur, ni ne resiste long temps: mais le soleil dure de tout temps, n'ayant son pareil au monde en splendeur.[18]

The previous sentence in Xenophon, which Montaigne places second, is, after 1588, the focus of the essayist's ridicule via Socrates:

> Socrates, en Xenophon, sur ce propos d'Anaxagoras, estimé par l'antiquité entendu au dessus tous autres és choses celestes et divines, dict qu'il se troubla du cerveau, comme font tous hommes qui perscrutent immodereemant les cognoissances qui ne sont de leur appartenance. Sur ce qu'il faisoit le Soleil une pierre ardente, il ne s'advisoit pas qu'une pierre ne luit point au feu, et, qui pis est, qu'elle s'y consomme; en ce qu'il faisoit un du Soleil et du feu, que le feu ne noircit pas ceux qu'il regarde; que nous regardons fixement le feu; que le feu tue les plantes et les herbes. (p. 535)[19]

A short remark, again indebted to Xenophon,[20] then seals this section: 'C'est, à l'advis de Socrates, et au mien aussi, le plus sagement jugé du ciel que n'en juger point' (p. 535).

By contrast with the previous section, Socrates' role has changed, as has the symbolic framework within which he operates. In the *œil du monde* passage, the focus was on the sweep of contradictory argument to be found in the history of natural philosophy, including sun worship, as the very emblem of the *essai* in its disputatious moods. Socrates there could be found caught up in the same contradictions. Here the emphasis is on Socrates as the critic of previous philosophical opinion, the embedded philosopher figure who above all exercises judgement, gainsays and contradicts, in line with the description of him given elsewhere in 2.12: 'Socrates va tousjours demandant en esmouvant la dispute, jamais l'arrestant, jamais satisfaisant, et dict n'avoir autre science que la science de s'opposer' (p. 509). In this register, and for the purposes of Montaigne's demonstration, the views of a Xenophontic Socrates are harmonized with his Platonic counterpart.[21] Plato's statement in the *Timaeus* about the difficulty of discussing *daemons* — 'c'est entreprinse [...] qui surpasse nostre portée' (p. 535) — is, for instance, cited immediately after Xenophon's strictures about withholding judgement about the divine. At the furthest stage in this line of argument, the very object of knowledge becomes dubious:

> Moy, j'ayme mieux croire qu'ils [=les philosophes] ont traité la science casuellement, ainsi qu'un jouet à toutes mains, et se sont esbatus de la raison comme d'un instrument vain et frivole, mettant en avant toutes sortes d'inventions et de fantasies, tantost plus tendues, tantost plus lâches. Ce mesme Platon qui definit l'homme comme une poule, il dit ailleurs, apres Socrates, qu'il ne sçait à la verité que c'est que l'homme, et que c'est l'une des pieces du monde d'autant difficile connoissance. Par cette varieté et instabilité d'opinions, ils nous menent comme par la main, tacitement, à cette resolution de leur irresolution. Ils font profession de ne presenter pas tousjours leur avis en visage descouvert et apparent; ils l'ont caché tantost sous des umbrages fabuleux de la Poësie, tantost soubs quelque autre masque: car nostre imperfection porte encores cela, que la viande crue n'est pas tousjours propre à nostre estomac: il la faut assecher, alterer et corrompre: ils font de mesmes: ils obscurcissent par fois leurs naïfves opinions et jugemens, et les falsifient, pour s'accommoder à l'usage publique. Ils ne veulent pas faire profession expresse d'ignorance et de l'imbecillité de la raison humaine, pour ne faire peur aux enfans; mais ils nous la descouvrent assez soubs l'apparence d'une science trouble et inconstante. (p. 545)

This lengthy but important passage returns to the same questions that had occurred in the *œil du monde* extract and with the same rhetorical techniques: the comments of an ironically detached *je*, the analogy with poetry, the attack on reason. Yet now the sun worship motif has disappeared, in favour of concentrating not only on the instrument of judgement (reason), but also its medium (poetry, imagination) and ultimately its practitioner (the philosopher). The discussion has thus moved from first principles to conceptual premises; from the sun and its status as a symbol for the divine and the meaning of its appearing to the stance of the investigator, the means by which he undertakes his enquiry, and its results. Montaigne sets up a double disjunction in that respect. First, he argues, using Plato and Socrates, that the philosopher is himself an impossible object because man is an imponderable topic of enquiry. If the philosopher cannot know himself, how can he know anything outside himself, such as first principles or the prime mover? Secondly, Montaigne re-asserts the central value of fiction in the work of philosophy, but considers that philosophical truth is hidden under the veil of poetic metaphor. In both cases, it is the disarming of reason that makes access to the truth oblique and gives rise to the philosophers' 'varieté et instabilité d'opinions' and 'science trouble et inconstante'. Contradiction, variety and instability are now the product of the unreliability of reason rather than of the disputatiousness of philosophical schools.

A particular process is taking place in this passage. It reworks the critical terminology of previous chapters, and previous sections in this same chapter, in order to produce a new conceptual cluster that will account for the disorderly thought of the Greek philosophers. Where 1.32 had urged respect for appearances without looking further, the present passage asks us to consider a possible explanation for philosophical appearances; where the *œil du monde* section foregrounds tensions and contradictions, this extract now offers a moment of reflective pause, a possible justification of philosophical diversity and doubting. The pivotal phrase here is 'cette resolution de leur irresolution'. In one sense, it conveys an already established idea: irresolution describes the philosopher Theophrastus earlier in Chapter 2.12 (p. 515) and so by extrapolation the result of the philosophical speculation described in the *œil du monde* episode. Yet this *hapax* could also be taken as one of the descriptions of doubt outside of a strictly Sceptical context, a way of describing the result of Greek philosophical activity that is not formally given the name or status of doubt but has some of its attributes, notably the technique of contradiction which Emmanuel Naya identifies as a major feature of Sceptical thinking congenial to a range of Renaissance literary writers.[22] Moreover, at a further level, all the extracts taken together form a sequence of thought through which Montaigne surveys and evaluates the very *method* by which the Greek philosophers of the Socratic and Pre-Socratic age sought to discuss and adjudicate the value of sun worship, the significance of appearances, or the relative importance of phenomena and noumena. Etymologically, 'method' means 'following after', and it is by following after, in the wake of, the method of Greek philosophers debating a crucial issue, the status of the sun and sun worship, that Montaigne gives a demonstration of his own method, a method that will itself ultimately be indebted to another Greek philosophy, Pyrrhonism, in order to advocate the benefits of suspension and doubt.

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'Si philosopher c'est douter, comme ils disent, à plus forte raison niaiser et fantastiquer, comme je fais, doit estre doubter' (p. 350). These words from the opening of 'Coustume de l'isle de Cea' find their perfect exemplification in Montaigne's treatment of the heliotropic theme, in three ways. First, in the content of the various episodes and the different varieties of doubt to which it gives expression: initial doubts about the representability of the divine are complemented by the persistent doubts of philosophers about the significance of what appears; and in this enquiry, to quote André Tournon again, 'le doute fait fonction non de crise initiale, mais de stimulant permanent des investigations'.[23] Secondly, in the activity of conjecture and hypothesis as products of 'fantasie' and 'niaiserie': this whole set of mediations about sun worship finds Montaigne in conjectural mode, and reflecting on its processes, implications and results. The essayist is perfectly aware of the double nature of conjecture as a necessity and as a weakness. Chapter 1.32 had demonstrated its limitations, and they are repeated in 2.12, notably the slightly earlier description, in a negative tone, of philosophers producing 'des conjectures foibles et folles, non qu'ils les prinsent eux mesmes pour fondement, ne pour establir quelque verité, mais pour l'exercice de leur estude' (p. 512), or the later description of Nature and conjecture, this time on a more positive note:

> Ay je pas veu en Platon ce divin mot, que nature n'est rien qu'une poësie œnigmatique? comme peut estre qui diroit une peinture voilée et tenebreuse, entreluisant d'une infinie varieté de faux jours à *exercer nos conjectures*. [...] Et certes la philosophie n'est qu'une poësie sophistiquée. (pp. 536–37; my italics).

As if by way of illustration of our propensity to conjecture, Montaigne provides us with instances of its exercise in the history of Greek philosophy, including an example he introduces by a lengthy quotation from French poetry — one of the rare such instances in the *Essais*. And that Ronsardian quotation, lifted out of its originally polemical context in the *Remonstrance au peuple de France*, becomes a pathway to philosophy, consistent with the link between the two forged here and repeated in a variant form, in the final passage analysed, as the description of the poetic veil under which philosophers have hidden their truths.

It is — thirdly and finally — the orchestration of all these elements that is no less revealing of the 'fantastique' and the 'niais', by the very 'bigarrure' of the montage. Thus the *œil du monde* sequence features a piece of imagined non-autobiography (the essayist as a sun worshipper), with the *je* in decidedly alternative mood; then a switch to poetry, 'l'originel langage des Dieux' (p. 995), in other words, contextually, to a philosophical fiction that acts as a stimulus to a further and longer borrowing that articulates a range of philosophical postulates; then finally a reversion to first-person enunciation, but in a very different vein from the opening one. The corresponding tableau later in 2.12 finds the *je* in an even more openly speculative frame of mind, hypothesizing about the reasons behind philosophical variety and provocatively attributing contradiction as an operative principle of enquiry to the awareness and attempted concealment of the defects of reason. Even so, the essayist's attitude throughout his analyses remains far removed from the severe moralizing that characterized other discussions of sun worship among his contemporaries;[24] his point is philosophical not theological, diacritical not diabolical. In other hands, his juxtaposition of heterogeneous materials and perspectives might serve syncretic purposes or be used to deploy learning around a central point. In the *Essais*, it is the very irregularity of the patterns — non-linear and non-sequential, paratactic and asyndetic — that allows the emergence of new configurations of meaning, and the placing of those juxtapositions is essential to the investigation being undertaken, along with the re-narrations, re-workings and variations which are all part of Montaigne's own essays in method. Speaking of the poet's art in Chapter 3.9, he writes admiringly, 'luy [=au poëte] eschappe des choses de diverse couleur, de contraire substance et d'un cours rompu' (p. 995). One hopes he would not have been displeased if the same description were applied to him.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, ed. by Jean-Raymond Fanlo (Paris: Champion, 2006), *Jugement*, vv. 2009–18; pp. 800–01.
2. Carl Havelange, *De l'œil et du monde: Une histoire du regard au seuil de la modernité* (Paris: Fayard, 1998).
3. *Les 'Essais' de Michel de Montaigne*, ed. by Pierre Villey and V.-L. Saulnier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), p. 468. All further references are incorporated in the text.
4. See further John O'Brien, 'La Vérité se rencontre-t-elle au train de la contingence?', in *Les Chapitres oubliés des 'Essais' de Montaigne*, ed. by Philippe Desan (Paris: Champion, 2011), pp. 93–106.
5. Cf. 1.23 with its long list of non-Western practices: 'le soleil, la lune, et la terre sont les dieux principaux; la forme de jurer c'est toucher la terre, regardant le soleil' (p. 113).
6. For another example, taken from 'Des cannibales', see John O'Brien, 'To the Ends of the Earth: Renaissance Journeys and Imagination's Sight', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 30/31 (2008), 17–31 (pp. 28–29).

7. The recent Pléiade edition cites Plutarch as the source of this idea; but, in view of our later enquiries, it is worth noting that the same idea comes up in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, 4.7: 'Surquoy tu as aussi à considerer que le Soleil, lequel semble bien aparent à chascun, ne permet point toutefois que les hommes le regardent pleinement & de droite veuë. Et qui entreprent de le contempler imprudemment, il y perd les yeux', *Oeuvres de Xenophon docte philosophe et valeureux capitaine Athenien. Nouvellement traduites en François, recueillies toutes en vn volume...* (Cologny: Pierre Aubert, pour la Société Caldorienne, 1613), p. 598. The French translation is used for convenience; Montaigne actually read Xenophon in Castellion's edition, *Xenophontis philosophi et historici ... opera* (Basle: Isingrinus, 1551).
8. A possible reference to the doctrine of Revelation, although Montaigne does not specify or elaborate.
9. Terence Cave, *Pré-histoires: Textes troublés au seuil de la modernité* (Geneva: Droz, 1999), pp. 53–59.
10. Cf. 1.27: 'condamner ainsi resoluement une chose pour fauce et impossible, c'est se donner l'advantage d'avoir dans la teste les bornes et limites de la volonté de Dieu et de la puissance de nostre mere nature; et qu'il n'y a point de plus notable folie au monde que de les *ramener* à la mesure de nostre capacité et suffisance' (p. 179); 1.32: 'il est mal-aysé de *ramener* les choses divines à nostre balance' (p. 216); 1.37: 'par ce vice de *ramener* leur creance à leur portée' (p. 231); 2.12: '*ramenant* le ciel soubs ses pieds' (p. 452); 2.12: 'nostre outrecuidance veut faire passer la divinité par nostre estamine. Et de là s'engendrent toutes les resveries et erreurs desquelles le monde se trouve saisi, *ramenant* et poisant à sa balance chose si esloignée de son poix' (p. 528). My italics in all cases.
11. Bernard Sève, *De haut en bas: Philosophie des listes* (Paris: Seuil, 2010), p. 193.
12. André Tournon, 'Doute', in *Dictionnaire de Michel de Montaigne*, ed. by Philippe Desan, 2nd edition (Paris: Champion, 2007), p. 330.
13. On the Pre-Socratics in Montaigne, see Bruno Tremblay, 'Connaissance et utilisation des premiers philosophes grecs dans les *Essais* de Montaigne', *Montaigne Studies*, 18 (2006), 183–222, and 'Tableau des renvois aux premiers philosophes grecs dans les *Essais* de Montaigne', *Montaigne Studies*, 19 (2007), 199–211. On Epicurus, see George Hoffmann, 'Épicure — Épicurisme', in *Dictionnaire de Michel de Montaigne*, pp. 383–87; Guido Canziani, 'La senilità, il piacere, la morte: Motivi epicurei nel terzo libro degli *Essais*', *Montaigne Studies*, 21 (2009), 87–102.
14. On the possible senses of this word, see Henri Estienne's annotations on the *Pyrrhonian Hypotyposes* in *Sexti Empirici Opera quae exstant* (Geneva: Chouet, 1621), p. 508.
15. Sève, p. 193.
16. See Emmanuel Naya, 'Le Scepticisme au XVIe siècle: L'Ombre d'un doute', in *Le Doute philosophique: Philosophie classique et littérature clandestine*, special issue of *La Lettre clandestine*, 10 (2001), 13–29.
17. Cf. his comments on Protagoras: 'Protagoras dict qu'il n'y a rien en nature que le doubte' (2.12, p. 526) and even Aristotle: 'Cettuy là est le prince des dogmatistes; et si nous aprenons de luy que le beaucoup sçavoir aporte l'occasion de plus doubter. On le void à escient se couvrir souvant d'obscurité si espesse et inextricable qu'on n'y peut rien choisir de son advis. C'est par effect un Pyrrhonisme soubs une forme resolutive' (2.12, p. 507).
18. *Oeuvres de Xenophon*, p. 608.
19. This follows Xenophon's original very closely: 'Car disant que le feu & le soleil ne sont qu'vne mesme chose, il [=Anaxagoras] n'a sçeu entendre que les hommes regardent facilement vn feu, mais leurs yeux ne peuuent durer contre le soleil: ni que ceux sur lesquels donne le soleil, en ont la couleur plus noire, ce que ne fait pas le feu. Il n'entendoit pas aussi que de tout ce que produit la terre, rien ne peut venir à perfection sans la lueur du soleil, là où le feu par sa chaleur & ardeur fait tout mourir', *Oeuvres de Xenophon*, p. 608.
20. Cf. *Oeuvres de Xenophon*, p. 608: 'En somme, il [= Socrate] defendoit toute curiosité & recerche des moyens que Dieu peut tenir en ses actions celestes'; and earlier, p. 512, for similar comments.
21. See *Xénophon et Socrate*, ed. by Michel Narcy and Alonso Tordesillas (Paris: Vrin, 2008); Deborah Levine Gera, 'Xenophon's Socrateses', in *Socrates from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, ed. by Michael Trapp (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 33–50; *Le Socratisme de Montaigne*, ed. by Thierry Gontier and Suzel Mayer (Paris: Editions Garnier, 2010).

22. Emmanuel Naya, 'Renaissance Pyrrhonism: A Relative Phenomenon', in *Renaissance Scepticisms*, ed. by Gianni Paganini and José Raimundo Maia Neto (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), pp. 15–32 (pp. 26–31, discussing Rabelais and Montaigne in this context); and on the general idea, Silvia Giocanti, *Penser l'irrésolution: Montaigne, Pascal, La Mothe le Vayer. Trois itinéraires sceptiques* (Paris: Champion, 2001).
23. Tournon, 'Doute', p. 329.
24. See Cave, *Pré-histoires*, pp. 60–61, discussing Bodin's condemnation of sun worship among the native Americans as demonic.

CHAPTER 2

Anecdote, Example, Method: Renaissance Accounts of the Death of Pliny the Elder

Rowan Tomlinson

Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* had many lives in the Renaissance. But so too did the Roman compiler's death. From the 1469 *editio princeps* onwards, the story of his demise in the eruption of Vesuvius on 24 August AD 79 provides a dramatic conclusion to the life of the author that was found in many of the numerous editions and translations of Pliny published across the long sixteenth century.[1] In the field of pedagogy, meanwhile, the anecdote could offer a cautionary culmination to biographical introductions to commentaries on Pliny that formed part of certain university arts curricula.[2] Interest in Pliny's death reaches beyond editions of or commentaries on his magisterial compilation, however. It also appears — variously compressed or embroidered — in compendia, miscellanies, universal histories, and collections of exemplary biographies, both Latin and vernacular.[3] The demands of these compiling genres, coupled with the ubiquity of the anecdote, mean that the story is frequently treated with the barest of detail, albeit at times — as is the case in Theodor Zwinger's *Theatrum vitae humanae*, where Pliny features in an inventory of illustrious deaths — accompanied by cross-references for the more curious reader.[4] Pliny appears most often as one amongst a heap of examples, be this in a list of famously assiduous figures from antiquity in Battista Fregoso's *Factorum dictorumque memorabilium libri IX*, first published in 1509;[5] in a chapter recording notable volcanoes in Pierre Boaistuau's 1560 *Histoires prodigieuses*, which includes a woodcut of Pliny standing proudly aflame next to Vesuvius;[6] or, in the case of Antoine Du Verdier's 1577 translation of Pedro Mexía's *Silva de varia lección*, in a catalogue of notable suicides, where Pliny is compared with the famously hubristic poet-philosopher Empedocles.[7]

The inclusion of Pliny in the last category flags the different ways in which the anecdote of his death is read and retold, as authors variously respond to or reject inherited readings of Pliny's actions (and come-uppance) and shape their version of the tale to fit with and reflect their particular preoccupations, be these didactic, moralizing or — as the anecdote becomes synecdochic for particular approaches to enquiry into nature — methodological. The variation in this commonplace narrative is in part, and inevitably, determined by the generic ends of the particular author or compiler. But it is also a result of the use, misuse, or neglect, of the textual evidence available to sixteenth-century readers and writers. There is no mention of suicide in its strictest sense in either of the two classical sources providing accounts of Pliny's death, namely the *Letters* of his nephew, Pliny the Younger, and a *Vita Plinii* that was for some time thought — falsely, as Joseph Scaliger and Isaac Casaubon would argue at the turn of the seventeenth century, and modern scholars have since confirmed — to be a vestige of a section of Suetonius's collective biography, the *De viris illustribus*, devoted to historians.[8] The Younger's lengthy, admiring, and at times droll narrative of his uncle's actions in the face of the Vesuvius eruption makes up letter VI.16, written at Tacitus's request (presumably to furnish the latter with details for his history of AD 79, regrettably not extant), and follows an earlier letter (III.5) which offers a more general portrait of the Elder Pliny and his writings, with the emphasis on his exemplary, if at times parodically committed, scholarly habits and erudition. In the later letter, Pliny the book-bound scholar and relentless compiler gives way to Pliny the active enquirer: his death, by inhalation of smoke and ash, as his nephew surmises, is attributed to a combination of (admirable) scientific curiosity — the conviction that the eruption should be 'investigated at close quarters' — and dutiful heroics.[9] The much briefer pseudo-Suetonius life of Pliny rehearses his nephew's image of Pliny as incorrigible scholar and courageous enquirer. The main difference is that a second possible cause of death is added to the theory of suffocation: a mercy killing, on the master's instruction, by a dutiful slave.[10] Both these sources were available, in variously partial forms, through the Middle Ages, though it was in the early Renaissance that the re-establishment in their complete, ten-book form of the lacunose Younger Pliny's letters led to their wider dissemination.[11]

The panegyric purpose of both the Younger Pliny's letter and the *Vita Plinii* means that in these texts the emphasis is firmly on celebration rather than on judgement of the actions that led to Pliny's death. The succinct treatments found in Renaissance compilations carry scant evidence of having engaged with the detail of these sources and are more likely the product of commonplacing practices and of the silent use of intermediary sources that Ann Blair has argued characterizes compiling and reference works of the Renaissance.[12] The level of detail offered in the Younger Pliny's narrative gives way, typically, to a simple statement of cause and effect, which, implicitly or explicitly, according to the heading or section of the miscellany in which he appears, upbraids Pliny for seeking an understanding of the workings of nature that — for a Christian reader — are beyond human comprehension: 'Plinius secundus quum nihil in maiore negocio haberet, quam rerum naturalium causas scrutari, periit in Vesevi montis incendio, dum rationem vellet inquirere' ['Pliny the Elder, since he had no greater occupation than to examine nature's causes, perished in the conflagration of Mount Vesuvius, as he wanted to investigate the reasons for it'], notes Ravisius Textor in his *Officina*;[13] 'fut surprins du bruslement de ceste montagne et suffocqué, comme il vouloit approcher trop prez pour veoir son mouvement', observes Sebastien Münster in the 1556 French translation of his *Cosmographia universalis*;[14] 'desirant de sçavoir la cause du continuel embrasement de ceste montaigne la fust allée voir, et se fust approchée de trop pres [... et] son corps fut mis en cendres', remarks Boaistuau.[15] Pliny's death thus constitutes an illustration of, and provides a moral lesson on, the consequences of *mala curiositas*.[16]

The vocabulary here is not, however, only concerned with the rights and wrongs of Pliny's *desire* to know. It also evinces an interest in methods of enquiry into nature: Pliny's death is depicted as the consequence of an investigation into causes, and/or as the result of a commitment to first-hand observation — an empirical urge — that is taken too far. The emphasis on causes overlooks the fact that Pliny's notion of *historia* explicitly distances itself from a concern with causation and makes no claim to the form of certain knowledge (*scientia*) to which exploration of causes leads; the description of natural particulars, he tells us, is its end goal.[17] The portrait of Pliny as empiricist, meanwhile, runs counter to the critique of the classical author as armchair scholar that was voiced in debates over Pliny's errors at the end of the fifteenth century.[18] An apparently discrete dispute over botanical terminology that Charles Nauert argues would contribute, by the end of the sixteenth century, to Pliny's discrediting as an authority on nature, the controversy did not stop empirically minded late Renaissance naturalists concerned with collecting natural particulars, such as Ulisse Aldrovandi, from holding Pliny up as a model.[19]

What the story of the death of Pliny the Elder offers us is an especially intensive illustration of this tendency to try to claim Pliny as exemplifying — negatively or positively — particular approaches to enquiry into nature. The wide scope of subjects covered by the *Natural History*, its methodological promiscuity and mixing of information and anecdote, coupled with the characterization, by the Younger Pliny, of his uncle as both relentless reader and intrepid empiricist, meant that there were many different caricatures of Pliny in currency — erudite scholar, polymath, fable-monger, martyr to science — each of which variously favoured or suppressed certain aspects of his broad and inclusive conception of *historia*. In what follows, I examine the character and role of the narrative of his death as presented by two vernacular writers who, in their own time and subsequently, have been associated with particular methodologies. The first is François de Belleforest (1530–1583), the prolific translator and compiler who, La Croix du Maine notes, at the foot of a long list of his many works, 'a peu écrit de son invention', whom René de Lucinge in his 1614 *Manière de lire l'histoire* calls an 'homme de grande leçon', and who, in modern scholarship, has been depicted by Frank Lestringant as the archetypal 'historien de cabinet'.[20] The second is Belleforest's one-time employer and collaborator, turned rival and litigant, the tireless traveller and cosmographer André Thevet (1516–1592). Dogged proponent of, as Lestringant puts it, 'l'autopsie souveraine' (p. 14), Thevet would criticize Belleforest for not being sufficiently empirical but would, in his turn, be accused by Lucinge of exaggerating his empiricism, having 'parsemé son œuvre de plusieurs fables foiblement appuyees sur le fondement de ses voyages'.[21] Some time ago Jean Céard argued that the virulence of Belleforest and Thevet's quarrel over authorship — and the way this had been read subsequently by certain scholars — had misrepresented them and that, in fact, on a number of important issues these writers 'pensent de même'.[22] What I argue is that this common ground is apparent too in the field of method, where, rather than demonstrating a simplistic commitment to one or other methodology available to the writer of *historia*, both Belleforest and Thevet — to some degree despite themselves — manifest a hybridity of method that recalls the inclusive, methodologically promiscuous approach of Pliny the Elder.

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François de Belleforest's treatment of Pliny's death is part of his 'Suite' to Pierre Boaistuau's 1560 *Histoires prodigieuses*, making up the third book of the expanded editions. It appears in Chapter XIII, 'Des monts qui vomissent flammes', one of six new chapters added in 1575 to Belleforest's initial collection of ten stories (which first appear in 1571).[23] The chapter includes two illustrations: a generic image of a volcano, at the opening, and a woodcut in which the confident Pliny of the 1560 *Histoires prodigieuses* is replaced with a figure falling backwards, overcome by flames, the drama of the situation heightened by the addition to the left of the image of a man fleeing the scene.[24] The narrative verve of this second image belies the rather less sensationalist character of the chapter, which opens under the banner of a discussion of *prodiges* in which Belleforest distances himself from and corrects popular opinion (that of the *vulgaire*) by aligning himself with the standard explanation of the prodigious in the period, Saint Augustine's theory of meaningful monstrosity, which Christianized Cicero's statements, in his *De natura deorum* and *De divinatione*, on the signification of portents, the latter of which is clearly recalled in Belleforest's remark that 'les Latins dient *Eo quod portendunt, monstrant, et ostendunt*'.[25]

The double reference to classical and patristic authorities is just the first in a series of assertions of Belleforest's scholarly credentials; across the course of the chapter he cites Lucan, Appian, and Horace, and sends the reader off to consult Virgil, Lucretius, Silius Italicus, and Claudian (p. 516). When it comes to turning from theory to the particular, however, perhaps sensitive to the vernacular genre in which he is writing, Belleforest claims to eschew more abstruse materials and sources, the hidden preserve of the savants. He opts instead for an example, the case of Mount Etna, that he claims is celebrated — and note the term 'chanté' here, set up in strong opposition to the vocabulary of the clandestine — by every author, with the result that it has virtually taken on the status of popular fable:

> Entre toutes les considérations prises sur ce sujet, bien qu'il y en ayt un nombre infiny, j'ay voulu choisir non quelque cas du tout si caché qu'il faille aller recercher les tesmoignages es plus secrets cachots des livres non fueilletez que par les hommes les plus sçavans, mais ce qui est chanté par tous les aucteurs et fait comme la fabule du vulgaire. J'ay, dis-je, choisy le mont d'Ethne (à present Montgibel). (p. 510)

Lest this distancing from the scholarly suggests a distancing from truth, a move into the realm of unlicensed and unattributed invention that constitutes the field of popular fable, Belleforest is quick to return to *inventio*. He does so by following the introduction to his topic with a glut of geographical and physical detail on Etna, which is anchored in a combination of textual authority and the provision of very specific detail that, in addressing the reader directly, is at times almost suggestive of a travel guide, as well as perhaps serving to create the effect of first-hand knowledge on the part of the author.[26] The topographical tour, however, soon encounters an object that prompts a shift from the descriptive into narrative: a tower purportedly built on the instructions of Empedocles, with the aim of observing Etna's volcanic activities, which occasions the commonplace anecdote of the death of the philosopher-poet, a byword in the period for disapproval of both *mala curiositas* and *vana gloria*.

Belleforest's account is not, at first, uncompromisingly censorious; he grants that there are alternative explanations for Empedocles' demise. It could be — Belleforest qualifies this with a parenthetical 'peut estre' — that Empedocles jumped into the abyss in despair at his failure to understand the causes of the volcano (a possibility that encourages a quick aside on Aristotle's purported suicide in the strait of Negropont). The other explanation, qualified with a still vague but nonetheless more assertive 'comme aucuns dient', is that his suicide was part of an attempt to pass himself off as divine. The provision of alternative explanations recalls one of the major sources on Empedocles in circulation in the sixteenth century, Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of the Philosophers*, in which the classical author speculates on a number of different readings of Empedocles' death, though Belleforest makes no explicit allusion to this. The source he does cite, in French translation, is Horace's *Ars poetica*, in which Empedocles famously features in the concluding section of the poem: 'La mort je vous diray du Poete de Sicile | Lequel voulant avoir le nom (o mal-habile) | D'un grand Dieu immortel se lanca froidureux, | Au gouffre flamboyant de l'Ethne chaleureux' (p. 513).[27] This quotation is used to shift the narrative firmly towards a condemnatory reading by suggesting that the qualifications Belleforest initially grants to Empedocles — he calls him a 'philosophe' and 'grand naturaliste', echoing Aristotle's categorization of Empedocles as a 'physiologus' (*Poetics*, 1447b, 18–19) — are undermined by his actions, which make him more akin to the mad poet referred to in the very closing lines of the *Ars poetica*, which follow immediately on from the quotation Belleforest provides. This association of poetry and madness is made explicit in the conclusion that Belleforest then draws from the bathetic detail, not featured in Horace but widely known, of Empedocles' sandals being found perched on the edge of the volcano: 'Mais la sottise de cest eternel Philosophe fut manifestée par ses pattins, qu'on trouva au bord du gouffre [...] si bien qu'en lieu de le reputer pour celeste, on le mit au ranc des fols, et des ambicieux sans raison ny jugement quelconque' (p. 513). It is at this inauspicious point that one volcano is swapped for another and Pliny the Elder makes his appearance:

> Si fol ne fut depuis Pline second lequel estoit conduit de trop grande curiosité de sçavoir les secrets de nature, s'avança plus qu'il ne devoit vers les caverneuses ouvertures du Mont de Somme et estant saisi de la vapeur et de la violence des vents tous pleins de feu, ne peut s'en retirer, ains y perdit la vie et le moyen de descouvrir les secrets que tant il vouloit entendre de la nature. (p. 513)

Belleforest's anecdote, which makes no obvious use of either pseudo-Suetonius or of the Younger Pliny, seems at first to toe the line of disapproval at Pliny's efforts to probe nature, which would tally with his insistence elsewhere in the chapter that the workings and intricacies of divine nature can surpass human understanding.[28] In such a reading, Belleforest would be rehearsing — albeit in an expanded version, into which narrative excitement enters via rather unsubtle alliteration — the simple cause and effect references found in Renaissance compilations: Pliny's death is, in this reading, the result of his overweening curiosity, with authorial disapproval here manifest in the transgressive implication of the negative modal, 'ne devoit'.

To read it so straightforwardly, however, would be to overlook the detail of this long sentence, as well as to discount the sympathetic tenor of the marginal annotation accompanying the section, which reads 'Mort pitoyable de Pline'. For while the story of Empedocles engenders the anecdote about Pliny, the two are firmly distinguished by the 'Si fol ne fut' structure: Pliny, unlike Empedocles, is not mad but reckless ('s'avança plus qu'il ne devoit'). He is not, as cosmographers — including Belleforest himself, in the earlier versions of his *Histoire universelle* — were wont to insist, a fable-forging proponent of a form of *historia* that is made up as much of 'resveries' as of carefully compiled, attested, or observed information.[29] He is not, that is to say, a *poet*, but an observer and gatherer of natural particulars whose authority remains such — and whose methodology is sufficiently robust — for him to be cited later in the same chapter, where his *Natural History* provides evidence on the history of Etna's eruptions (p. 517). The will to excuse Pliny is evident, too, in the fact that Belleforest tells us that, along with his life, Pliny loses 'le moyen de descouvrir les secrets que tant il vouloit entendre de la nature'. This is less a statement about the impossibility of probing such natural phenomena as Vesuvius (or Etna) as a comment on the fact that this particular, model enquirer into nature lost his life — and, if we read 'le moyen' in the context of this scene of empirical enquiry, the empiricist's tools, his senses — in his quest for knowledge.

Belleforest has his own motives for resisting condemnation of Pliny's death by enquiry; the remainder of his chapter is notable for its methodological and epistemological confidence in exploring natural phenomena, for a sustained interest in the worth of empirical knowledge, and for the conviction that the surest methodology is a reasoned and well-judged (*pace* Empedocles) combination of observation and textual authority. This involves Belleforest forestalling accusations that information he is presenting as veridical ('ce qui donne assez à cognoistre') might be based on little more than his own conviction, or else on half- or even mis-remembered reading — 'affin que je ne vous parle par cœur' — by bringing in long stretches of quotation from Tommaso Fazello's 1558 history of Sicily, *De rebus Siculis decades duae* (Palermo: Joannes Matthaeus Maida and Franciscus Carrara).[30]

The quotations act as eyewitness at one remove as Fazello's first-person narrative relates his experience of ascending and then observing Etna. It culminates in a description of the historian and his companions lying on their stomachs 'à la bouche de la fosse pour y voir jusqu'au fond', a scene which, in the context of Belleforest's chapter, cannot help but recall Empedocles and Pliny. Fazello's account makes no mention of the classical figures. But when he and his companions are suddenly frightened by the violence of the volcano's roaring and heat, Fazello draws a moral lesson on *mala curiositas*, concluding that 'nous detestions le desir et conseil trop curieux qui nous avoit incité de faire ce voyage'. Belleforest, on the other hand, is not prepared to read this as a warning of the dangers of curiosity. He interrupts his long quotation from Fazello to declare allegiance to the importance of observation:

'Je n'ay veu n'y leu auteur qui plus clerement descrive les miracles de ceste montagne que faict ce Fazelle Sicilien, comme celuy qui parle par experience'. Where Belleforest has no need to gloss his textual source, on the other hand, is in the shared conviction of both writers that knowledge rooted in experience might help to expose irrational and fantastical explanations for natural phenomena. Fazello's concerted effort, when observing the volcano, to heighten his vision and hearing is set side by side with, and in opposition to, the speculations of the credulous: 'nous jectasmes plus ententivement nostre veuë et occupasmes l'ouie pour voir et entendre ce qui estoit de rare en ceste caverne, qu'aucuns trop superstitieux ont estimé estre une gueule d'enfer'. Here, the term 'superstitieux', which Randle Cotgrave glosses as 'more curious about or fearefull of a (divine) thing then needs', serves a double purpose. It primarily allows Fazello to critique those who read natural phenomena too readily through a simplistic biblical lens. But, via a rhetorical move that bears the trace of *praeteritio*, the parallel shade of meaning of 'superstitieux' — those who are over curious about things in general, divine or otherwise — enables the historian to hold in check any suspicion of presumption on his part in claiming to explain what could well be the mysterious workings of God: 'non que je veuille [rejecter] la simplicité d'aucuns, et la grande saincteté ausquels Dieu peut avoir declaré en ce lieu des choses par vision qui semblent à nous impossibles'. Belleforest picks up on Fazello's references to this superstitious reading but, for his part, absolves those enquiring into nature by moving condemnation — by means of a collocation, 'la curieuse superstition' — firmly back on to those who assume the chasm to be the entrance to hell:

> Et quant à ce que d'aucuns mectent en avant les muglemens, bruits hideux, et sons representans des voix gemissantes, qu'on oyt en ces lieux souterrains, ne faut le raporter du tout à la curieuse superstition de ceux qui dient que c'est une gueule d'enfer. (p. 523)

Further scorn is apparent in the clause that follows. Here, Belleforest first compares the 'curieuse superstition' of the mouth-of-hell interpretation to poetic inventions, scathingly alluded to earlier in the chapter, whereby the volcano is Vulcan's forge.[31] He then disproves both by turning to detailed description and explanation, backed up by a comparison with observable, common experience to which the reader is equally likely to be able to testify:

> [(]ainsi que les Poëtes de jadis ont faint que là dedans estoit la marmite de Vulcan) veu que cela advient pour l'entrée, et bouche de l'abisme trop angoisseuse, dedans lequel entrants ou plustost estans poussées de grosses roches eminées par le feu, causent ce bruit et ainsi qu'elles tombent en ostent [sic] de leur place, et les mesmes bas; comme vous voyez qu'en advient és puits plus profonds si par cas vous y jectez quelque pierre des plus massives. (p. 523)

We might, here, seem to be some way from Pliny's catastrophic end. But the attitude to Pliny apparent in Belleforest's version of the anecdote of his death is part of a broader effort across the chapter to legitimize enquiry into nature. This entails separating Pliny firmly from the unreasonable and vainglorious Empedocles and in so doing implying a distinction between *historia* and poetry that is predicated on a conception of *historia* as a descriptive form of knowledge rooted in experience. This does not, on the other hand, lead to the abandonment of textual evidence in favour of the authority of the empirical. This is in part because experience can be either direct or at one remove, as is evident in the case of Belleforest's use of Fazello. But it is also because, both within the first-hand narrative that makes up the quoted text from Fazello and within Belleforest's framing chapter, the methodological ideal that is held up is for the evidence of experience to be used not instead of but in conjunction with information gathered from written texts.[32] This methodology mirrors, in the field of vernacular writing, the conception of *historia* as a combination of empiricism and erudition that Gianna Pomata and Nancy Siraisi have argued was characteristic of many disciplines central to humanistic culture in the Renaissance.[33] It also, notably, mimics Pliny's own approach in his *Natural History*, a methodologically hybrid work which boasts of and demonstrates mammoth compiling efforts but which also frequently provides examples drawn from experience, whether these are natural particulars seen by Pliny himself or gathered through direct witness at one remove. In emphasizing these aspects of *historia*, what Belleforest chooses to neglect, on the other hand, is the very aspect of Plinian *historia* that he had earlier railed against in his *Histoire universelle*: namely, Pliny's tendency to include in his portrait of nature the unattributed and the anecdotal — what amounts to fable — as well as the compiled and the observed.

* * * * *

For André Thevet, countering the image of Pliny as fable-monger is a prominent concern of the life of the natural historian featured in his 1584 collective biography, the *Vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres*, a series of exemplary lives of figures, taken from a variety of periods, religions, countries, and disciplines, complete with portraits of each subject.[34] The chapter on Pliny offers both conventional praise of the man, whose polymathy and civic as well as scholarly achievements Thevet emphasizes in describing him as a 'tres-excellent Orateur, subtil Philosophe, veritable Historien, Juge tres-equitable et heureux guerrier', and a paean to the 'copieux tresor' that is his *Natural History*, whose scope in subject matter is indicated by a hyperbolic account of the erudition and wide reading that produced it ('Bref rien ne luy a esté inçogneu, nulle chose a esté escrite par aucun à laquelle il n'ayt donné fort avant attainte' (fol. 612^{v})). In his cosmographical and topographical works, Thevet's methodological stance comes across as binary: he tends to construct a simplistic opposition between erudition and empiricism, which he applies in order to separate ancients and moderns, and *philosophes* — associated with theory and speculation — and empirically minded practitioners, of which the most prominent type is, naturally, given Thevet's interests and practices, the cosmographer.[35]

The genre of exemplary lives, whose biographies are necessarily reliant on textual compilation, might seem to give little scope for promotion of such a methodological position. The case of Pliny is an exceptional one, though. Not only because his sensational death allows writers to cast judgement on the worth of empirical enquiry into nature, but because the way the *Natural History* was read was illustrative of varied conceptions of what *historia* was and was not. Thevet broaches the issue of how Pliny is read explicitly and polemically:

> Je ne veux adjouster foy au vulgaire, qui, ne pouvant au vray discerner les choses esloignées de leur sens commun, ont donné titre de menteur à ce veritable et plus hardy Historien, qui soit entre tous les Latins, comme si ce que l'on ne voit à present et en tous lieux n'estoit à croire. Et du nombre de ceux la sont les acasanés, qui ne virent jamais autre chose que les cendres au coing du feu, ny ne croyent que ce qui leur vient en fantaisie et nean-moins se moquent et detractent de ceux, qui ont veu et visité les nations estrangeres et fidelement descrit leurs mœurs [,] façons de faire et choses par eux observées, comme a faict Pline. (fol. 613^{r})

This defence of Pliny takes on two groups of detractors. First under fire are those, dismissed as the 'vulgaire', who dispute the credibility of the *Natural History* because some of its content — no doubt it is Book VII, with its monsters and marvels, which is being targeted — goes against their 'sens commun'. The term does not seem here to be carrying the meaning of the Aristotelian *sensus communis* but is more akin to what we understand today by 'common sense'; it is suggestive of a practice of judgement defined by the lived experience of the person making the judgement.[36] However, this is not, for the usually empirically minded Thevet, a positive, as the *sens commun* of the *vulgaires* who label Pliny a liar is too restricted. In questioning the textual authority of Pliny, it does not allow for either historical or geographical diversity and offers an impoverished view of the possible scope of nature ('comme si ce que l'on ne voit *à present* et *en tous lieux* n'estoit à croire'), dismissing as fabulous features of nature that are beyond its purview. Thevet does not raise the theological issue that is in the background here, namely the presumptuous claim to be able to measure what is possible and impossible in the divine handiwork of nature. Instead, he moves on to define a sub-group amongst the 'vulgaire', which he labels the 'acasanés' ('stay-at-homes'). These people, refusing to leave their hearth, are in thrall not to their *sens commun* but to the whim and fanciful products of their minds ('ce qui leur vient en fantaisie').

Thevet's own experiences become tangled at this point with his apology for Pliny as he seeks to answer those who had accused him of including invented as much as observed material in his cosmographical writing. It is clear that the 'acasanés', though defined as part of the 'vulgaire', are in fact denoting those writers and compilers who do not prioritize observation in their depiction of natural particulars. Thevet then introduces a third group, from whom these fire-side fantasists could not be more different: those who have travelled, observed, and carefully recorded natural particulars, and who in so doing are purportedly following the precedent of Pliny himself ('comme a faict Pline'). This depiction of Pliny as traveller and first-hand gatherer of natural particulars sets up, then, the account of Pliny's death which follows and which Thevet presents — in language in which panegyric meets the rhetoric and grammar of the wonder book — as the climax of a list of the many 'choses notables' that make up the classical author's life:

> J'omettray en ce brief Eloge les choses notables, qui se disent et escrivent de luy, des grands biens et recerches, qu'il amassa, pendant qu'il eut le vent en poupe, et lors qu'il estoit employé au gouvernement et administration de la chose publique, comme aussy de son authorité et somptuosité, qui estoit, veritablement manigfique [*sic*] pour venir à sa mort, laquelle est une des plus estranges qui se

> lise. Car comme estant Capitaine general sur une armée de mer il passa par la coste de Messine en Sicile, se souvenant du feu et embrasement perpetuel de la montaigne d'Aethna, luy vint en volonté de la veoir, et cognoistre la nature & occasion de ce feu perpetuel. De faict en aprochant de pres fut environné incontinant des flammes sortans de la montaigne, et vif embrasé. (fol. 613^{v})

Here Thevet firmly casts Pliny as a committed enquirer into the particulars of nature, in a rejuvenation of curiosity the language of which ('vif embrasé') bears a hint of religious martyrdom, suggesting that Pliny sacrificed himself to the cause of probing nature.[37] This version, more strongly still than Belleforest's, absolves Pliny of presumption, in part because Thevet makes no mention of — and so shuts down any explicit comparison with — the vainglorious Empedocles. The volcano by which Empedocles' sandals were found, on the other hand, does feature, as Thevet relocates Pliny's death, moving it from Vesuvius to Etna. A logical result of another error in his account, which is to confuse Misenum, in Campania, with Messina in Sicily, this confusion is nonetheless a small-scale reflection of a more crucial misprision in Thevet's life of Pliny: namely, that the 'Pline Second' he depicts is a conflation of Pliny the Elder and Pliny the Younger, a fictional construct whose wondrous *Natural History* Thevet praises but who is also lauded for his role in persuading the Emperor Trajan to cease the persecution of Christians.[38] This blunder had precedence in confusion of the two Plinies across the Middle Ages, which in the early fourteenth century prompted the Veronese *mansionarius* Joannes de Matociis to write a biographical note distinguishing the two (*Brevis adnotatio de duobus Pliniis*), and even Erasmus, in his preface to his 1525 Froben edition, at one point attributes a comment from the Younger's *Panegyricus* to the Elder.[39] Yet the wide availability of Pliny the Younger's letters in print from the 1500s onwards had largely clarified the issue by the time Thevet was compiling his lives.

The merging of the two Plinies is suggestive as to the range of sources that lie behind Thevet's account and, concurrently, illustrative of Thevet's methods in constructing his history, a work published at a point when Thevet was no longer benefitting from the contributions of the more learned Belleforest. There are details and anecdotes included in the life that can be traced back to the Younger Pliny's writing: the reference to Larcius Licinus (whom Thevet calls Largius Licinius) wanting to buy the Elder's notebooks for 400,000 sesterces, for example (III.5.17). Yet these should not be read as testimony to a direct acquaintance with their text of origin; they were no doubt in currency in the commonplacing culture of the period. Thevet's conflation of the two Plinies more likely points to his not having known — or, perhaps more importantly, banking on his *reader* not knowing — in real detail the Younger Pliny's letters, which in turn suggests that he was not familiar with Latin editions of the *Natural History*. These, as I observed above, were very commonly printed with the life of Pliny by his nephew, either in digest form or in the shape of the two letters concerned with the Elder's biography.[40] Pseudo-Suetonius's *Vita Plinii* was also often included in the paratextual material of Renaissance editions. But this very brief life is found, too, in earlier sources, including the enormous and influential four-volume compilation of Vincent de Beauvais, the *Speculum maius* (composed 1244–55). The fourth part, the *Speculum* *historiale*, includes chapters on the works and biography of 'Plinius secundus' and, in acknowledging the many borrowings made for the earlier volume (the *Speculum naturale*), makes one Pliny of the distinct authors of the *Natural History* and the *Letters*: 'De quo ingenti eius volumine excerpta in speculo naturali locis congruis inserui: eiusdem epistolas ad diversos circiter centum reperi' ['From whose massive book I have inserted excerpts in suitable places within my *Speculum naturale*. You will find around a hundred of the same man's letters to various correspondents'].[41]

Vincent's work was printed early on, in separate volumes, with the most widely read *Speculum historiale* appearing in four editions before 1500 and in French twice (1495 and 1532); it was one of the medieval *florilegia* that Blair has argued remained in use by humanists because they aided philological work in offering sections of classical texts that were no longer extant, or evidence of alternative recensions or manuscript traditions.[42] If Thevet did make use of the *Speculum historiale*, however, it was not to perform such textual scholarship as to plunder it for details and anecdotes with which to build and flesh out his brief life. In others of his works, such as his *Cosmographie de Levant*, Lestringant has argued, Thevet makes a show of his supposed erudition, demonstrating an 'humanisme d'emprunt' which, if falling short of consulting a classical humanist corpus first-hand, draws on 'robustes compilations' of the early sixteenth century.[43] In this later work, Thevet does not advertise, or even acknowledge, what looks to be his reliance on a pre-humanist source, the *Speculum*. On the contrary, the chapter on Pliny ends with an explicit distancing from such medieval compilations, which acts both as a further defence of Pliny and as an attempt to suggest that Thevet is not just a collector of learned references compiled by others but someone who himself has an active grasp of scholarship.

The section in question follows an expression of regret for a lost work of Pliny and an assertion that a spurious work — which Thevet calls 'de re medica' — is indeed by the ancient natural historian: this is the *Medicina Plinii*, a compilation of the medical portions of the *Natural History* with material from other sources, probably composed during the third century, and in print in the sixteenth century.[44] It is then that Thevet turns, in some anger, to the tendency for people to claim Pliny as the author of works he had *not* written: 'Or comme ce personnage avoit si tres-grande vogue, plusieurs, qui avoyent composé des livres, pour leur donner requeste, ont voulu en attribuer le nom à ce digne Philosophe, qui, sans advocat ou autre, qui parle pour luy, pourra tousjours se laver de telle imposture.' Once again, Thevet's own experiences of court cases over authorship are clearly implicit here. However, what is striking in terms of Thevet's interest in method is the way in which he proposes to bolster what he insists is the inherent ability of Pliny's works and reputation to resist such annexation:

> Seulement voudroye je employer pour sa deffense ce qu'on a de coustume d'opposer à ceux qui font mestier et marchandise d'imposer quelque crime de faux à autruy. C'est le rapport de l'escriture, lettres, et paraffe de celuy, qu'on pretend faire fausaire. Par ainsi qu'on rapporte le stile du miroir naturel et d'autres livres, que quelques uns veulent faire advoüer à nostre Pline, avec son histoire naturele on y trouvera autant, à redire des uns aux autres que du jour à la nuict. (fol. 613^{v})

Thevet starts by moving back for a moment from the specialist issue of textual attribution in order to introduce the idea of a generic accusation of forgery ('crime de faux') and of the kinds of investigation or proof that are customarily employed to counter it: namely, scrutiny of the writing, characters, and signature of the potential forger ('paraffe' is a variant on 'paraphe', which Cotgrave glosses as both 'flourishe, knot, or marke set unto or in stead of a name in the signing of a Deed, or a Letter' and, more generally, 'any such graceful setting out of a mans hand, or name in writing'). There is an implied analogy here with the authentication of manuscripts by textual scholars, achieved through comparison of individual hands, which Thevet then brings out and adapts for the case of printed works by suggesting that the way to discredit false attributions to Pliny — and the example given is the 'miroir naturel', the French rendering of Vincent's *Speculum naturale* — is through careful consideration of their respective 'styles', a term which could cover both linguistic character and, more broadly, order, in the sense of the shape and structure of a work.

What Thevet does, then, at the close of his chapter on Pliny is to complement his promotion of Pliny's empiricism — crystallized in his rendering of the death of the natural historian — with an attempt to assert an understanding of and commitment to methods of textual scholarship, to a close scrutiny of texts that belies any simple division between erudition and empiricism and, in so doing, displays a methodological hybridity that mirrors that of its subject, Pliny. To what degree does the engraving that accompanies Thevet's brief life reflect this? The image, in whose design and commissioning Thevet insists in his preface he was heavily involved, does not depict the climactic moment of Pliny's death but, conforming with the other illustrations in the *Vrais pourtraits*, offers a head and shoulders portrait. It presents a concentrated, studious Pliny at a desk on which samples of flora sit alongside an illustrated work of natural history, in which the different animals are, minimally at least, grouped by species; an empiricist returned to his study, in the course of taming and classifying flora, with further textual authorities — or even presses in which to store the evidence he has gathered? — beneath his left hand. The image would seem, then, to represent the pairing of empiricism and erudition that Belleforest and Thevet promote and, to varying degrees, themselves embody in the chapters that treat the death of Pliny.

* * * * *

In the eighth book of his 1599 treatise on the theory and practice of history, *L'Histoire des histoires*, Lancelot Voisin de La Popelinière offers his reader a caricature of the kind of history that he is seeking to discourage. This consists of a devastating critique of the methods and works of Belleforest and Thevet, in which he undermines their scholarship, invalidates the experience on which their empirical credentials depend, questions their grasp of languages and of disciplines, and accuses them of writing hotchpotch histories that weave together the general and the particular willy-nilly and according to their whim:

> Ces deux ores amis, ores ennemis à la poursuitte de leurs vacations: ont autant mal merité des bonnes lettres, qu'ils estoient indigne de les traicter. Voire aussi

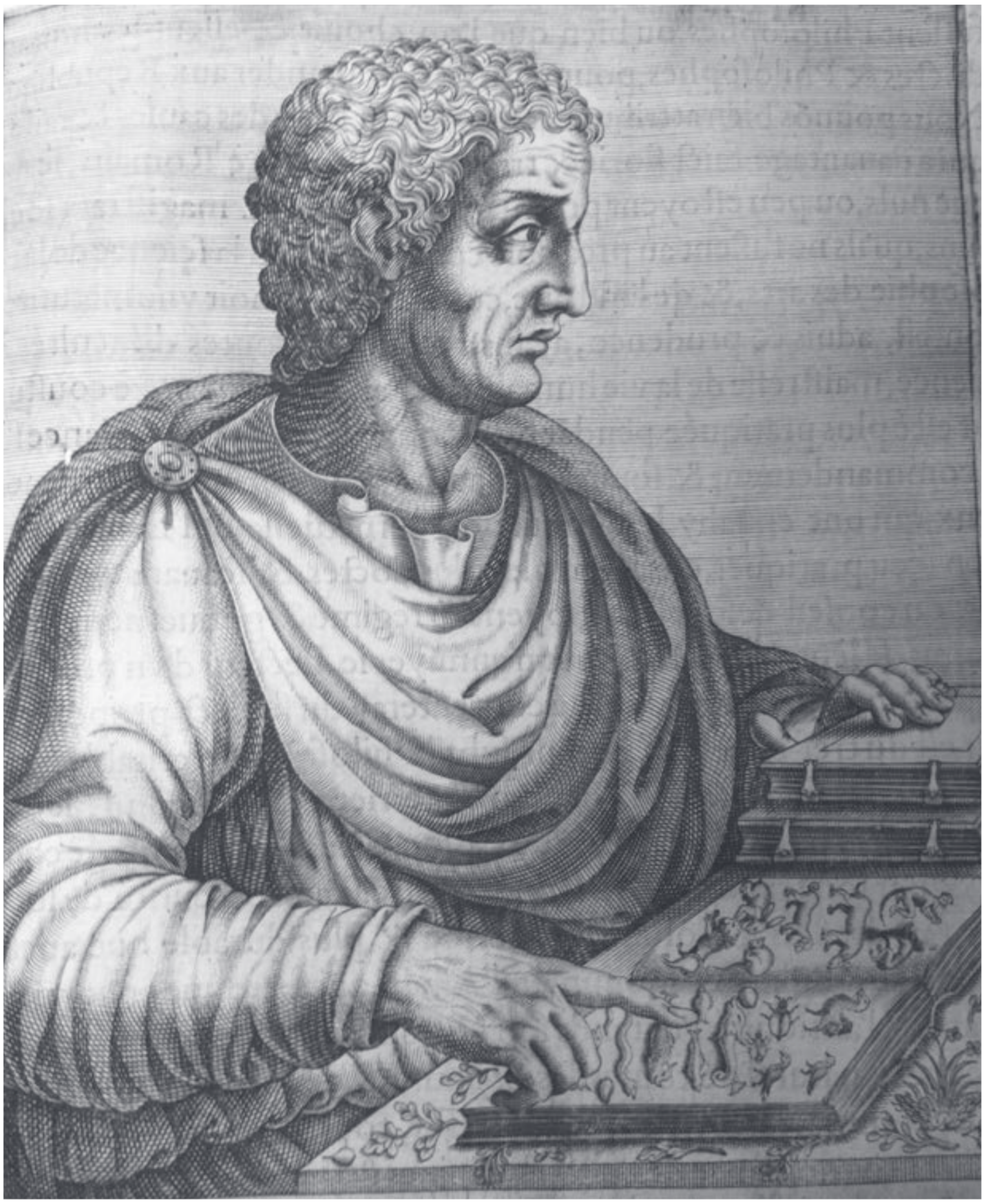

Fig. 2.1. André Thevet, *Vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres, Grecz, Latins, et Payens, recueilliz de leur tableaux, livres, medailles antiques et modernes*, 2 vols (Paris: la veufve J. Kervert and G. Chaudiere: 1584) (The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford: shelf mark Douce. Subt. 39, I, fol. 612^{r}.)

> despourveuz d'esprit, de jugement, de memoire, et de toutes les conditions qu'un bon naturel y peut apporter: que fournis de hardiesse, à mal interpreter et pirement escrire, ce qu'ils n'entendirent jamais. Et pour ce qu'à l'un quelques mal considerez voyages: et à l'autre, une desreglée volonté d'escrire, favoriserent un peu leurs essais envers le vulgaire, qui ne veut et ne scauroit prendre le loisir de bien examiner aucune chose: ils se licentierent tellement à chafourrer le papier: que tous les Imprimeurs de Paris, preferans leur mal mesurée capacité d'esprit, à tous ouvrages judicieux: s'emploioient comme à l'envy à les acheter, publier et faire veoir à tout le monde. Et bien qu'ils n'eussent jamais esté bien instruits en leur jeunesse: voir sans aucune valable experience des choses de ce monde: pauvres d'ailleurs et desnuez de tous les moiens que les plus advisez ont tousjours nommé les aesles de vertu: Ces esprits universels toutesfois, ont passé sur toutes vacations. Il n'y a langue, ny science qu'ils n'ayent profané. Ils ont mesme barboüillé l'Histoire particuliere, generale et universelle à leur sotte fantasie.[45]

La Popelinière's attack is driven in part by the desire to convince his reader that the ideal practitioner of *historia* is born as much as formed; if Belleforest and Thevet are poor historians, this can be put down to their comparatively lowly background, which means they lack the necessary 'bon naturel', have been insufficiently educated, and are hence jobbing writers for whom the need to earn their way overrides the judgement that is essential to *histoire accomplie*. This pillorying is, however, more than a social judgement. It is also illustrative of a particular set of assumptions about what *historia* should and shouldn't be, in which the chronological, selective, and objective collation of particulars drawn from the *right* kind of experience in tandem with correct interpretation of the *right* kinds of text, is set up in opposition with a more 'horizontal', inclusive mode of *historia*. The former, according to La Popelinière, stems from the will to narrate ('narrer'), the latter amounts to little more than to telling stories ('conter').[46] The result is a form of *historia* that is, in La Popelinière's view, at best a ragbag of information and sources pieced together ('ils ont rapetassé leurs foibles escris') and at worst a form of writing that leaves even inadequate *inventio* behind and enters the realm of invention: '[s]upposans infinies choses qu'ils s'estoient ridiculement fantasiez en leur trop mal conditionné cerveau'.[47]

La Popelinière's register here is polemical and hyperbolic. But his parodic portrait does, nonetheless, draw attention to a characteristic of Belleforest's and Thevet's mode of writing. We have seen how the former himself speaks scathingly of 'fantasie' and 'fabule' and seeks firmly to separate the fantastical Empedocles from the empirical Pliny, how the latter works hard in his account of Pliny's life and death to rescue the Roman natural historian from accusations of fable-mongering, and how both writers claim allegiance to an ideal of a fine balance of erudition and empiricism. Yet this purported methodological stance belies the fact that their retelling of the death of Pliny draws on a hallmark of Plinian *historia* that is less overt, traceable, or attributable than either the testimony of first-hand witness (direct or at one remove) or the explicit use of textual authorities: namely, the adaptation of experience that is the anecdote, the textual equivalent of hearsay, and which at one end of the scale (and in Belleforest's case) can be identified with commonplacing and at the other (in the example of Thevet, whose account is a distortive mishmash of unattributed sources) with the realm of fable or fiction; a form of narration less concerned with the establishment of the truth about the particulars of a subject than, as Thevet puts it in the front matter of his *Vrais pourtraits*, with managing to 'ouvrir l'appetit' of the reader.[48] Looking to shape a new, more selective form of *historia*, in which the factual and the fabulous are firmly distinguished, La Popelinière rejects Belleforest and Thevet quite so vehemently because they are too imitative of Pliny; not in the restrictive understanding of Plinian *historia* that Belleforest and Thevet, in their retelling of the narrative of Pliny's death, promote and claim to fulfil, but in the truer and fuller sense in which the compiled, the observed, the overheard (or tacitly absorbed), and the unattributed go hand in hand.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. For a thorough survey of editions and translations of the *Natural History*, see Charles J. Nauert, 'Caius Plinius Secundus', in *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum*, ed. by Paul Oskar Kristeller et al., 9 vols (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1960–), IV (1980), 297–422.
2. See, for example, the Wittenberg pastor Paulus Eberus's *De vita et scriptis C. Plinii quaedam, praefationis loco recitata a Paulo Ebero, auspicante explicationem secundi libri naturalis historiae* (Wittenberg: Heirs of G. Rhau, 1556). This was intended to accompany Eberus's commentary on the controversial second book of the *Natural History*, which remained in manuscript. The copy I consulted is thought to have belonged to Robert Burton, who would himself include Pliny's death in his 1621 *Anatomy of Melancholy* as a lesson against the dangers — and vanity — of curiosity (see *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. by Thomas C. Faulkner et al., 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), I, 365 (Part I. Sect. 2: Memb. 4. Subs. 7)).
3. In her article, 'La "Prodigieuse mort de Pline" selon Boaistuau et quelques autres', Guylaine Pineau-Kliebenstein provides a useful survey of some of these occurrences, taking as a central focus a chapter in Pierre Boaistuau's 1560 *Histoires prodigieuses*. Some of the arguments presented are not adequately nuanced, however, and the article shows limited engagement with Pliny himself (*Figurations du volcan à la Renaissance: Actes du colloque international du C.E.R.H.A.C.*, ed. by Dominique Bertrand (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), pp. 35–52).
4. Basel: Joannes Oporinus, 1571, 20 vols, Volume XVII, Book VIII, p. 2631: 'Periit in montis vesevi incendio dum eius causam indagare cupit' ['In his desire to investigate its causes, he perished in the conflagration of Mount Vesuvius'] (translations my own, unless otherwise indicated). Zwinger here acknowledges his debt to the *Commentariorum urbanorum libri XXXVIII* of Volaterranus (Raffaello Maffei), first published in 1506. It may well be that this influence was filtered through the work of Zwinger's stepfather, the tireless compiler Conrad Lycosthenes, whose notes and compilations Zwinger used and added to for his *Theatrum*. On Zwinger, Lycosthenes, and compilers more generally, see Ann Blair, 'Compilers, their Motivations and Methods', in *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 173–229.
5. Lyon: Pierre Cavellat, 1587, fol. 280^{v}: 'Intelligendi autem tanto studio tenebatur, ut dum nimis progreditur, incendii quo Vesuvius deflagrabat causas inspecturus, fumi magnitudine praefocatus, interierit ['He was in thrall to the desire to understand — so much so, that he died. While pressing too far forward in order to look into the causes of the fire by which Vesuvius was being consumed, he was asphyxiated by the sheer quantity of smoke']. This was first published in Milan in 1509.
6. Pierre Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses* (Paris: Vincent Sertenas, 1560), fol. 34^{r}.
7. *Les Diverses leçons* (Lyon: B. Honorat, 1577), p. 150: 'Pline fut bruslé du feu du mont Aetna, dit à présent Montgibel, comme de mesmes Empedocle.' Pliny does not feature, as we might have expected, in Du Verdier's collection of exemplary lives, the 1573 *Prosopographie* (Lyon: Antoine Gryphius). On Empedocles, to whom I return below, see Gérard Defaux, *Le Curieux, le glorieux*

et la sagesse du monde dans la première moitié du XVIe siècle: L'Exemple de Panurge (Ulysse, Démosthène, Empédocle) (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1982).

8. On the attribution to Suetonius, and for full references to Scaliger and Casaubon, see Michael Reeve, who also provides an edition and translation of the fragment: 'The Vita Plinii', in *Pliny the Elder: Themes and Contexts*, ed. by Roy K. Gibson and Ruth Morello (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 207–22.
9. *Pliny the Younger: Complete Letters*, ed. and trans. by P. G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), VI.16.7. On the letters about his uncle, see Roy K. Gibson, 'Elder and Better: The *Naturalis Historia* and the *Letters* of the Younger Pliny', in *Pliny the Elder: Themes and Contexts*, pp. 187–205; and on the narrative and generic strategies of the *Letters* more broadly, Rhiannon Ash, '"Aliud est Enim Epistulam, Aliud Historiam ... Scribere" (*Epistles* 6.16.22): Pliny the Historian?', *Arethusa*, 36 (Spring 2003), 211–25. A number of articles read Pliny's letters as reliable historical evidence, using them to speculate on the likely medical causes of Pliny's death. One suggestion is that the somewhat portly Pliny might have died from a heart attack. See, for example, Conway Zirkle, 'The Death of Gaius Plinius Secundus (23–79 A.D.)', *Isis*, 58 (1967), 553–59.
10. Reeve, p. 213.
11. See 'The Younger Pliny', in *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. by L. D. Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 316–22; on Suetonius, see Reeve, who adds to the account given in Reynolds (pp. 404–05).
12. Blair, *Too Much to Know*. And, on commonplacing, Ann Moss, *Printed Common-place Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
13. *Officinae epitome* (Lyon: Sebastianus Gryphius, 1560), p. 76. The *Officina* was first published in 1520.
14. Sebastian Münster, *La cosmographie universelle* (Basle: Henry Pierre, 1556), p. 210.
15. Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses*, fol. 35^{v}.
16. On this notion, see Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), pp. 228–29; and on curiosity more generally, see amongst others, *La Curiosité à la Renaissance*, ed. by Jean Céard (Paris: Société d'édition d'enseignement supérieur, 1982) and Neil Kenny, *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
17. As he states in the eleventh book of the *Natural History*, 'nobis propositum est naturas rerum manifestas indicare, non causas indagare dubias' (Pliny, *Natural History, with an English Translation in Ten Volumes*, trans. by Harris Rackham (London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann, 1940, second edition 1983), III, XI.2.8).
18. Arturo Castiglioni offers a full account of the intricate chronology of the quarrel in 'The School of Ferrara and the Controversy on Pliny', in *Science, Medicine, and History: Essays on the Evolution of Scientific Thought and Medical Practice written in honour of Charles Singer*, ed. by E. Ashworth Underwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 269–79.
19. On Pliny's reputation, see Nauert, 'Humanists, Scientists, and Pliny: Changing Approaches to a Classical Author', *American Historical Review*, 84 (1979), 72–85 and Brian W. Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe, 1490–1620* (London and Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 30–34 and 121–33 especially. On Aldrovandi and the influence of Pliny on natural history in Italy, see Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 61–70 and *passim*.
20. See *Premier volume de la Bibliotheque du sieur de la Croix du Maine* (Paris: Abel l'Angelier, 1584), p. 88; and René de Lucinge, *La Manière de lire l'histoire*, ed. by Michael J. Heath (Geneva: Droz, 1993), p. 92. Frank Lestringant's comment is found in his first study of Thevet: *Andre Thevet: Cosmographe des derniers Valois* (Geneva: Droz, 1991), p. 170. This offers much detail on the friendship, working relationship, and subsequent decline in relations and rivalry of Belleforest and Thevet.
21. Lucinge, p. 80.
22. Jean Céard, *La Nature et les prodiges: L'Insolite au XVIe siècle*, 2nd edn (Geneva: Droz, 1996), p. 283, n. 39.

23. *Histoires Prodigieuses, augmentées outre les precedentes impressions, de six histoires advenues de nostre temps, adjoustées par F. de Belle-forest Comingeois, avec les pourtraicts & figures* (Paris: Charles Macé, 1575).
24. I refer in this essay to the edition of 1594: *Histoires prodigieuses extraictes de plusieurs fameux autheurs, Grecs et Latins, sacrez et prophanes, divisees en cinq livres [...] Nouvellement augmentées de plusieurs Histoires, et enrichies de leurs effigies outre les precedentes impressions* (Antwerp: Guislain Janssens), in which the chapter concerned is found at pp. 508–29 and the illustration of the falling Pliny at p. 518. The complex history of the editions and continuations of the publishing success that was the *Histoires Prodigieuses* is treated comprehensively in Stephen Bamforth's 'Bibliographie Chronologique', included in his edition of the text (Pierre Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses (édition de 1561). Edition critique* (Geneva: Droz, 2010), pp. 275–329). He also provides an intricate account of the history and range of the various illustrations found across the different editions. Bamforth's research supplements the bibliography included in Michel Simonin's study of Belleforest: *Vivre de sa plume au XVIe siècle ou La Carrière de François de Belleforest* (Geneva: Droz, 1992).
25. Cicero's statement reads: 'Quia enim ostendunt, portendunt, monstrant, praedicunt, ostenta, portenta, monstra, prodigia dicuntur' ['Because they "make manifest", "portend", "intimate", "predict", they are called "manifestations", "portents", "intimations", and "prodigies"'] (*De divinatione*, I.42.93; translation from *Cicero: De Senectute, De Amicitia, De Divinatione*, with an English translation by William Armistead Falconer (Loeb: London, 1923, repr. 1996)). The classic study on this topic is Céard, *La Nature et les prodiges*, in which the sections of the *Natural History* dealing with monstrous races feature prominently (pp. 12–23 especially). For a broader study of the cultural significance of the monstrous in the period, see Wes Williams, *Mighty Magic: Monsters and their Meanings in Early Modern Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
26. See, for example, p. 512: 'Mais si vous montez ung peu plus haut du costé de l'Abbaye de sainct Nicolas de Renes, bastie et fondé par Symon Comte de Policastre, petit fils de Roger, Comte de Sicile, vous voyés le pays en partie boscageux, et partie tout bruslé des l'an 1537'.
27. The French does not mirror that of Jacques Peletier du Mans's translation of Horace, first published in 1541, and may well be Belleforest's own rendering.
28. See, for example, p. 516: 'il y a des traits qui surpassent toute humaine capacité'; also p. 518 and p. 529.
29. Commenting on the monstrous races depicted in the *Natural History*, Belleforest declares in a marginal note that 'Tout cecy sont des resveries de Pline et de son singe Solin' (*L'Histoire universelle du monde* (Paris: G. Mallot, 1570), fol. 51^{r}). Céard notes that this earlier outrage gives way, in the extended 1575 edition of the *Histoire*, and via Belleforest's newfound recognition of God's playful and creative nature, to a more sympathetic reading of Pliny (*Nature et les prodiges*, p. 282).
30. Quotations in this section are from pp. 513–15, unless otherwise stated.
31. The first reference features not only Vulcan, making Jupiter's lightning bolts, but 'les Cyclopes marteleurs' and Jupiter's punishment of the giant Enceladus (p. 516).
32. See, for example, the passage where Fazello, having defended his broader right to question authorities, including Pliny and Strabo, argues that a purported characteristic of Etna is confirmed both by the latter's evidence and by 'la veuë' (p. 516). Also, the moment where Belleforest gives as justification for a statement the double guarantee of textual authority backed up by observation ('suivant la sentence des Philosophes et l'experience nous le faisant assez cognoistre' (p. 521)).
33. See the important introductory essay to *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition*, ed. by Gianna Pomata and Nancy Siraisi (Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 2005), pp. 1–38.
34. André Thevet, *Vrais pourtraits et vies des hommes illustres*, 2 vols (Paris: la veufve J. Kervert and G. Chaudiere: 1584), I, fol. 612^{v}–613^{r}. All references will be taken from this edition and will be given in parentheses in the main text. Thevet makes extensive reference to a second edition in his paratexts but this did not appear in his lifetime. On the other hand, the text was reduced in scope and republished in 1671 in a pocket-book version, the *Histoire des plus illustres et scavans hommes de leurs siecles*. Extracts from the work were also used in English collective biographies. See Lestringant, *André Thevet*, pp. 279–89.

35. See, for example, the *Cosmographie Universelle* (Paris: Pierre l'Huillier and Guillaume Chaudière, 1575), 2 vols. Here, as Lestringant argues, Thevet belittles the Ancients who 'spéculaient dans le confinement de leurs cabinets et dont le regard dépassait rarement l'ordonnance régulière, mais bornée, de leurs portiques' (*L'Atelier du cosmographe, ou l'image du monde à la Renaissance* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1991), p. 33). In the same vein, he pours scorn on those in his period who rely on textual compilation, here targeting Belleforest: 'Certes ce brave correcteur se devroit contenter, à contenir sa langue, suvyant son babile inutile, et s'amuser plustost aux fabuleuses histoires Tragiques de l'Espaignol Bandel, luy qui ne voyagea jamais non plus que les Hiboux qui repairent en l'Aqueduct d'Athenes, ou à l'Hippodrome Byzantin, sans dementir tant de grands personnages Naturalistes, et moy pareillement, qui ay veu le contraire de ce que luy ne les autres ignorans par leurs raisons n'ont jamais peu decider' (I, fol. 244^{r}).
36. On 'common sense' in its Aristotelian signification — as one of the five internal senses, responsible for comparing data gathered by the external senses — see Katharine Park, 'The Organic Soul', in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. by Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner, 6th edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 [1st publ. 1988]), pp. 470–71.
37. This account atypically chooses not to use the term 'cause', preferring 'occasion'. Though this term can carry the meaning of 'cause' — Cotgrave glosses it as 'an occasion; cause; oportunitie, fit season' — its use perhaps skirts round a more explicit attribution to Pliny of an interest in causation.
38. 'Par advertissement donc de Pline, Trajan feit un Edict que desormais on n'accusa et recercha plus les Chrestiens' (fol. 613^{r}).
39. The *Brevis adnotatio* can be found appended to MSS of the *Natural History*, or else of the eight-book tradition of the Younger Pliny's *Letters* (for example, Bodleian Cod. Auct. F. ii. 22). See Elmer Truesdell Merrill, 'On the Eight-Book Tradition of Pliny's Letters in Verona', *Classical Philology*, 5 (April 1910), 175–88, which includes a transcription of the work. Erasmus's preface has been reprinted as Letter 1544, addressed to Stanislaus Thurzo [bishop of Olomouc in Moravia], Basel, 8 February 1525, in *The Collected Works of Erasmus: Letters 1535 to 1657, January–December 1525*, trans. by Alexander Dalzell, ann. by Charles G. Nauert Jr (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 26–30.
40. Antoine Du Pinet's French translation, on the other hand, which was first published in 1562 and much reprinted thereafter, does not contain a life of Pliny. We might, then, suspect that when Thevet used Pliny the Elder, he consulted this vernacular version.
41. Vincent de Beauvais, *Speculum quadruplex, sive, Speculum maius: naturale, doctrinale, morale, historiale*, 4 vols (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlaganstalt, 1964–65), IV, 391).
42. Blair, *Too Much to Know*, p. 43, n. 148.
43. *Atelier du cosmographe*, p. 64.
44. See Arturo Castiglioni, 'Pseudo-Plinian Medicine', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 20 (1946), 201–06; and Aude Doody, 'Authority and Authorship in the *Medicina Plinii*', in *Authorial Voices in Greco-Roman Technical Writing*, ed. by Liba Taub and Aude Doody (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2009), pp. 92–105.
45. *L'Histoire des histoires. Avec l'idée de l'histoire accomplie. Plus le dessein de l'histoire nouvelle des François* (Paris: Jean Houzé, 1599), p. 456.
46. *L'Idée de l'Histoire accomplie*, p. 26 (this second treatise is published alongside but paginated separately from the *Histoire des histoires*).
47. *Histoire des histoires*, p. 458.
48. *Vrais pourtraits*, I, fol. biii^{r}.

CHAPTER 3

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Image and Idolatry: The Case of Louis Richeome

Anthony Ossa-Richardson

It is not uncommon for historians, faced with the print controversies of early modernity, to evince a distaste for their acrimony and apparent futility; one is often told that disputants were 'speaking past each other', and that their points of disagreement, often theological in nature, were simply intractable. Nonetheless, argument reveals assumptions on each side, embodied in a language given as literal, but received as 'mere' metaphor. This is well exhibited in confessional exchanges about idolatry — a cloud of theological issues to which the slippery concepts of representation and metaphor were central, and which in turn underpinned many specific conflicts of doctrine, notably on the Eucharist and the worship of saints. The notion of the idol, the false image, was one way to make sense of deviation; but for others it seemed that every image, every representation, was already a misrepresentation. Thus the language of idolatry, while undeniably vivid, and resonant in its implications, was an unsteady one, and those who made use of it were liable to find it wrenched away from them. Even if an early modern controversialist spoke past his opponent to other members of his own party, the 'meaning' of his work was not a fixed quantity, but rather a truce with his reader, susceptible not only to rupture but to *annulment* by those more sensitive to the figurative possibilities of his language.

The Jesuit Louis Richeome, having published his 1608 masterpiece, *L'Idolatrie huguenote*, proving irrefutably, once and for all, that Calvinism was the work of Satan, discovered that his own symbols, both verbal and visual, were liable to be turned against him — and in a most ungentlemanly fashion. His narrative of idolatry, of diabolical imitation, parody and flattery, drawn up with such care and eloquence, was revealed to be, in the hands of his Huguenot nemesis Jean Bansilion, the perfect platform from which to take apart Catholicism. Richeome's tropology of pagan religion, grand in execution, informed his theological arguments with a literary spirit — but it was a fickle spirit, and his tropes, which Bansilion reconfigured, could signify only as much as each author spelled out for them. Both writers, in grounding their assertions in metaphor and narrative, ceded control of meaning.

* * * * *

Louis Richeome (1544–1625) was a definitive product of the culture of French Jesuit humanism in the second half of the sixteenth century; educated at the Collège de Clermont under Juan de Maldonado, in 1586 he went on to teaching and ecclesiastical posts around the country.[1] For his elegant pen, his 'plume bien taillée', Richeome was dubbed the French Cicero among his peers, although, given his apologetic zeal and distaste for intellectual novelty, he might have been better called the French Lactantius. The Jesuit historian Henri Brémond saw in him the first great example of what he termed 'l'humanisme dévot', an elegant and pragmatic culture represented above all by François de Sales; to this, Marc Fumaroli objected only that Brémond downplayed the aestheticizing, rhetorical character of the movement, which he preferred to think of instead as a 'baroque littéraire'.[2] Since the 1960s, scholarship has been interested less in Richeome's stylistic elegance than in his central importance as a theorist of imagery and rhetoric, for two works in particular: the *Tableaux sacrez* (1601), studied by Poussin and Rubens, and *La Peinture spirituelle* (1611).[3] Here the Jesuit pushed back against Protestant iconoclasm, extolling both the visual and the verbal image — 'la peinture muette' and 'la peinture parlante' — as potent vehicles for religious meditation, expression and enlightenment. The *Tableaux*, for instance, presented a series of engraved plates, with ekphrases or textual descriptions modelled on Philostratus, to counter a Protestant assault on the sacrament of the Eucharist.

When *L'Idolatrie huguenote* was published, Richeome was serving as assistant to the superior general Claudio Acquaviva in Rome; he had conceived the work two years prior, but found little time amid his travels and duties to accomplish it. The treatise marks the meeting of two intellectual traditions: on the one hand, the Renaissance mythographies of Lilio Giraldi, Vincenzo Cartari and Natale Conti, and on the other, the counter-Protestant polemics of the Catholic Reformation, as practised by Richeome's Jesuit colleagues, Guillaume Baile, Jean Gontery and Jean Mocquet.[4] The imagery of the first tradition is used to frame and shape the theological content of the second: the pagan deities, that is, trope a sustained critique of Calvinist doctrine, each god the type or exemplar of a modern heresy.

Richeome's purpose was to establish a narrative of the origins of Calvinism, an aetiology. The sixteenth century had witnessed a considerable discussion about the intellectual origins of both confessions, and the Jesuit's analysis has something in common, if only superficially, with the incipient genre of 'pagano-papistical' polemic — a genre on which Bansilion would draw. Since Luther and Calvin, Protestants had compared aspects of Catholic worship, especially the use of relics and worship of saints, to ancient heathen idolatry.[5] The Devil, they argued, beaten back by the triumph of the Saviour, sought to refound his kingdom in the heart of Christianity, bringing pagan customs into use among the faithful, and slowly corrupting the true Church after the era of the apostles. Such a claim had already been made by the Fathers, of whom Cyprian and Augustine were the most cited.[6] By 1600, this line of attack was on the increase. It was well used in the Rabelaisian satire by Philippe de Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde, *Le Tableau des differens de la religion*, and in 1605 blossomed into a full monograph, François de Croy's *Les Trois conformités*, which contained 63 chapters detailing the correspondences between pagan and Catholic worship.[7] Croy's book, and a similar treatise by Oliver Ormerod in England, set the tone for a century or more of Protestant work on both sides of the channel.[8]

Catholic scholars, for their part, had been remarkably comfortable with the idea of pagan survivals at Rome: these were noted and tolerated, for instance, by Bartolomeo de las Casas, Cesare Baronio and Guillaume de Choul in the second half of the sixteenth century.[9] But a defence could be offered: the Devil, as the *Singe de Dieu*, had stolen good practices from the Church, and imitated them in corrupt form among the pagans; the Catholic resemblance to heathenism could thus be taken as a mark not of devilry, but of divinity, for the counterfeit presupposes the true. This argument we find, to take just one example, in the 1600 *Histoire pontificale* of Jean-Baptiste de Glen, on the subject of holy water.[10] With his usual twinkle of irony, the philosopher François de La Mothe Le Vayer would later comment:

> Si nous emploions librement à l'embellissement des Autels Chrestiens quelques étoffes du Japon ou de la Chine, que nous sçavons avoir esté tissuës et travaillées par des mains idolâtres: Pourquoi ferions nous difficulté de nous servir des dictions ou des pensées de ceux qu'une differente religion a separez de nous, et rendu mesme ennemis de nos veritez Evangeliques?[11]

All this was unnecessary as theology, and a far cry from the doctrinal combat and biblical hermeneutics most familiar to students of Reformation conflict. But the construction of a narrative for one's opponent's beliefs, though crude historicization, is an excellent means of undermining any pretention to universality; and the derivation of those beliefs from paganism — that is, from Satan — was a devastating blow to any claim to divine truth. Narrative, for this reason, underwrote a considerable tranche of theological critique from the Reformation through to the eighteenth century, in France as elsewhere.

It was in this arena that Richeome found himself in 1608. He had already rallied the Jesuits against enemies both within the Church and without: the mycophobe Étienne Pasquier, for instance, and the monarchomach aristocrat Philippe de Mornay.[12] Meanwhile, Croy's book was out, and dangerous. So Richeome resolved to bring to the Calvinists an attack like that which they had brought to the Catholics. Protestantism, he affirmed, had its origin in the operation of the Devil, who sought to reconstruct the idols of pagan antiquity in a new, more insidious form:

> [L]e Diable en ces siecles derniers a compilé le bris et le metail de toutes les vieilles Idoles payennes rompuës par la Predication de l'Evangile de JESUS CHRIST, et en a fondu, et moulé les vostres d'un artifice admirablement frauduleux, et avec des traicts non corporels et grossiers, mais spirituels et subtils, si desliez qu'ils ne se laissent apercevoir qu'à ceux, qui ont les yeux de l'ame bien nettoyez [...].[13]

The heresy of the Protestants was thus a 'spiritual idolatry', not a material one, as with the pagans. The spiritual, in fact, had been prior, even in antiquity: 'ceux qui erigeoyent des Idoles visibles [...] les avoient devant forgees, et adorees en leur esprit, de maniere que L'Idolatrie interieure et invisible est l'ame de l'exterieure et visible'.[14] Calvin did not have stone idols, but only the idols of the mind, invisible, and therefore more dangerous. Nevertheless, since the invisible idols held the pattern of the visible, there was a genetic resemblance, and so Richeome's analysis turned on an account of the old as a prelude to the new. *L'Idolatrie* was a treatise, first and foremost, about images.

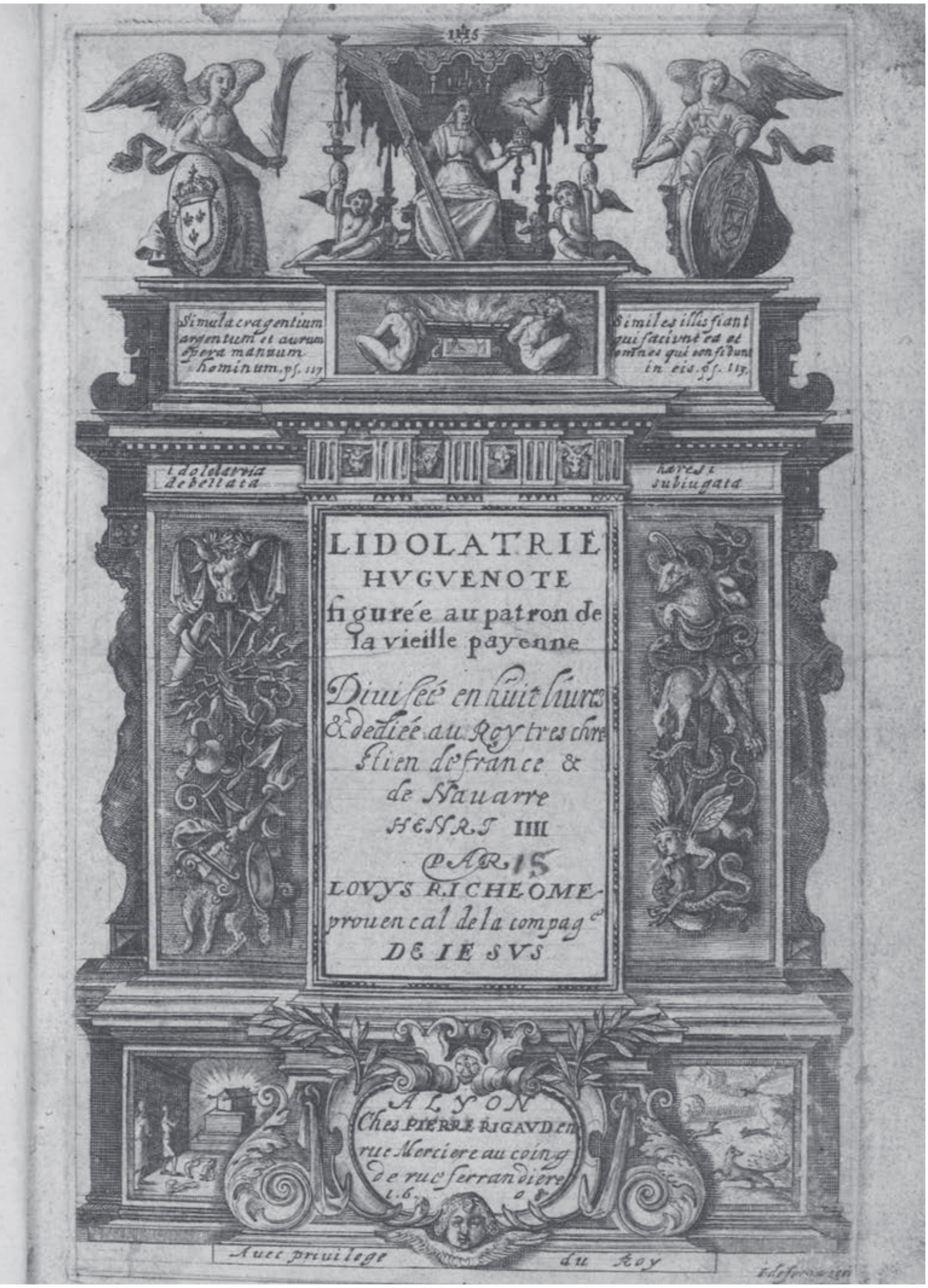
In this respect we may discern an obvious continuity with his work on sacred pictures. And as with the plates and ekphrases of the *Tableaux sacrez*, Richeome began *L'Idolatrie* with an allegorical engraved title page, described and explained in the preface. The explanation was there to avoid any ambiguity in the image, and the image was there to reveal the message vividly, especially to the uneducated: the two elements were symbiotic. As Richeome had argued in an earlier essay:

> [L]a peinture est plus convenable au menu peuple, avec quelque preallable cognoissance donnée de bouche, car il est plustost tiré par le sens, que par l'esprit, et ne void si bien les pourfils et couleurs d'un discours bien tissu, comme les traicts et lineamens d'une image.[15]

The title page is intended to show the triumph of the true Church over pagan idolatry and heresy.[16] The Church, as a matronly statue at the top, holds cross, Bible, keys, and papal tiara, under a canopy supported by four angels, two of whom are hidden by perspective. The Holy Dove 'donne ombre' to the group. Beneath her dominion, the pagan captives of Idolatry and Heresy are bound naked to a smashed and blazing altar; below these, the heads of beasts worshipped by heathens, and, flanking the title, the trophies and spoils of paganism. For Richeome, who designed the plate, the message was obvious, and underlined further by a verse of the psalter, and by the legend, *idololatria debellata*. Truth had conquered falsehood, and the spoils and captives of the dead religion were on display.

Jean Bansilion (1575–1637), a Huguenot minister at Vauvert, responded to Richeome a year later, with a point-by-point refutation entitled *L'Idolatrie papistique*. He saw something very different in the Jesuit's title page. For him, the image — *Richeome's* image — was a condemnation of the Catholic Church in schematic form.[17] The Church, far from having vanquished paganism and hung up its trophies, has in fact adopted and incorporated its idols: 'la Papauté les [*sc.* L'Idolatrie et l'heresie] a mises dessous son joug pour les faire servir à son advancement'. The animal heads represent not pagan idols, but the brutish prelates and monks of Rome. The keys are not to heaven, but to the papal treasure-chests. The angels supporting the canopy stand for the monarchs who sustain the Church; if only two can be seen, it is because half of Europe's princes have joined the cause of Reform.

In a classic study of prints and propaganda in Reformation Germany, Robert Scribner observed, with Barthes quietly haunting his endnotes, the essential ambiguity of an image as polemic, since its message 'could be decoded in ways other than those intended by the propagandists'. He added: 'To this extent visual propaganda alone was ill-suited to establish any new orthodoxy, or to convey doctrines. The ambiguity inherent in the visual image could, of course, be resolved by the use of image plus text, with the latter supplying an unambiguous reading.'[18] Richeome himself, in his *Tableaux sacrés*, advised the use of text to resolve visual ambiguities.[19] But with the title page of *L'Idolatrie*, the accompanying text was not only unable to ward off a rereading of the image, it was susceptible to reinterpretation itself. Bansilion turned to the Dove, quoting Richeome's description:



IHS

Simulacra gentium
argentum et aurum
opera manuum
hominum. ps. 117

Similes illis fiant
qui faciunt ea et
omnes qui confidunt
in eis. ps. 117.

idolelarria
debellata

haresi
subiugata

LIDOLATRIE
HVGVENOTE
figurée au patron de
la vieille payenne
Diuiseé en huit liures
& dediée au Roy tres chre
stien de France &
de Nauarre
HENRI IIII
PAR IS
LOVYS RICHEOME
prouencal de la compag^{ie}
DE IESVS

A LYON
Ches PIERRE RIGAVD en
rue Merciere au coing
de rue Ferrandiere
1.6. 08

Auec priuilege du Roy

I. de Fornazeri

FIG. 3.1. Allegorical title page from the 1608 Lyon edition of Louis Richeome, *L'Idolatrie huguenote figurée au patron de la vieille payenne.* (The work was also printed at Rouen and Arras in the same year; the title pages of these versions are almost identical, but of inferior quality.) Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland.

> *Sur tout cela donne ombre le S. Esprit*, parce que c'est sous ce pretexte de la possession du S. Esprit qu'elle ombrage et obscurcit toute la foy Chrestienne. Car c'est ainsi que Dieu à fait parler Richeome, *que cest Esprit donne ombre*, pour nous monstrer combien est different l'Esprit de l'Eglise Rom[aine], le propre duquel est de couvrir d'ombre et d'obscurité, de celuy de la vraye Eglise, qui esclaircit et illumine ses enfans.[20]

The Jesuit is condemned from his own pen, because it is not his own pen. All this makes a game of our intuitions about meaning and representation. Bansilion does not say that Richeome's image *can* be taken to mean the opposite of what Richeome intended: he says that it *does* mean the opposite of what Richeome intended. Meaning has been decisively severed from intention, and awarded instead to the voice of God. For Bansilion, as later for Coleridge, Truth is a 'divine ventriloquist'.[21] The problem of human meaning in the face of the divine, in fact, is already present in the Old Testament, and the classic case was that of the pagan prophet Balaam, glorifying the Israelites in the speech of Jehovah. But with Balaam there had been no illusion of choice: the prophet knew that he was communicating the message of his enemy, and there was no ambiguity in the expression. Bansilion's wit, by contrast, is to reveal unforeseen and disruptive polysemy in the Jesuit's choice of phrase. In laying claim to God's meaning, he has stripped Richeome of his human autonomy, that is, of both his reason and his freedom to express what he wants to say. It is the most brazen act of reappropriation, an *anti*-hermeneutics.

* * * * *

Richeome's title page served as a microcosm for the work as a whole, which ran to over eight hundred pages. The pagan gods are enumerated in turn, with information taken from Conti and elsewhere; their symbolic 'essence' is identified, and then applied to Protestant, and especially Calvinist doctrine. The specific paths taken through the material vary, as opportunity required.

This can be seen, for instance, in his section on Saturn, the second of the Devil's guises among the heathens. Richeome, first of all, finds the Calvinists *admitting* the filiation of their religion from Saturn; he points to a printer's device used by Conrad Badius for his early books at Geneva, showing 'Truth' led from a cave by her father Time, *veritas filia temporis* (see Fig. 3.2). The image was popular among Protestants, who saw themselves as having rescued religious truth from the caves of Catholic obscurity; it found its way to England, where it wound up on the title-page of Bacon's *New Atlantis*.[22] For Richeome, by contrast, this 'figure mystique' showed Saturn, or Time, leading his daughter, the Protestant religion, out of Hell. Truth does not come 'des creux manoirs et pleins d'obscurité', as Badius had glossed his device, but from Heaven: it is rather falsehood — and Richeome must have enjoyed the homonymy of *faux*, denoting also the scythe in Saturn's hand — that emerges from darkness.[23]

Already in Richeome's treatise is the play of image and meaning adopted by Bansilion. It was somewhat hypocritical of the latter to protest at this use of the device, but of course he did: 'bon Dieu, qui ne recognoistra que c'est un argument de papier', he exclaimed, quoting Horace: *Pictoribus atque poetis | quidlibet audendi*

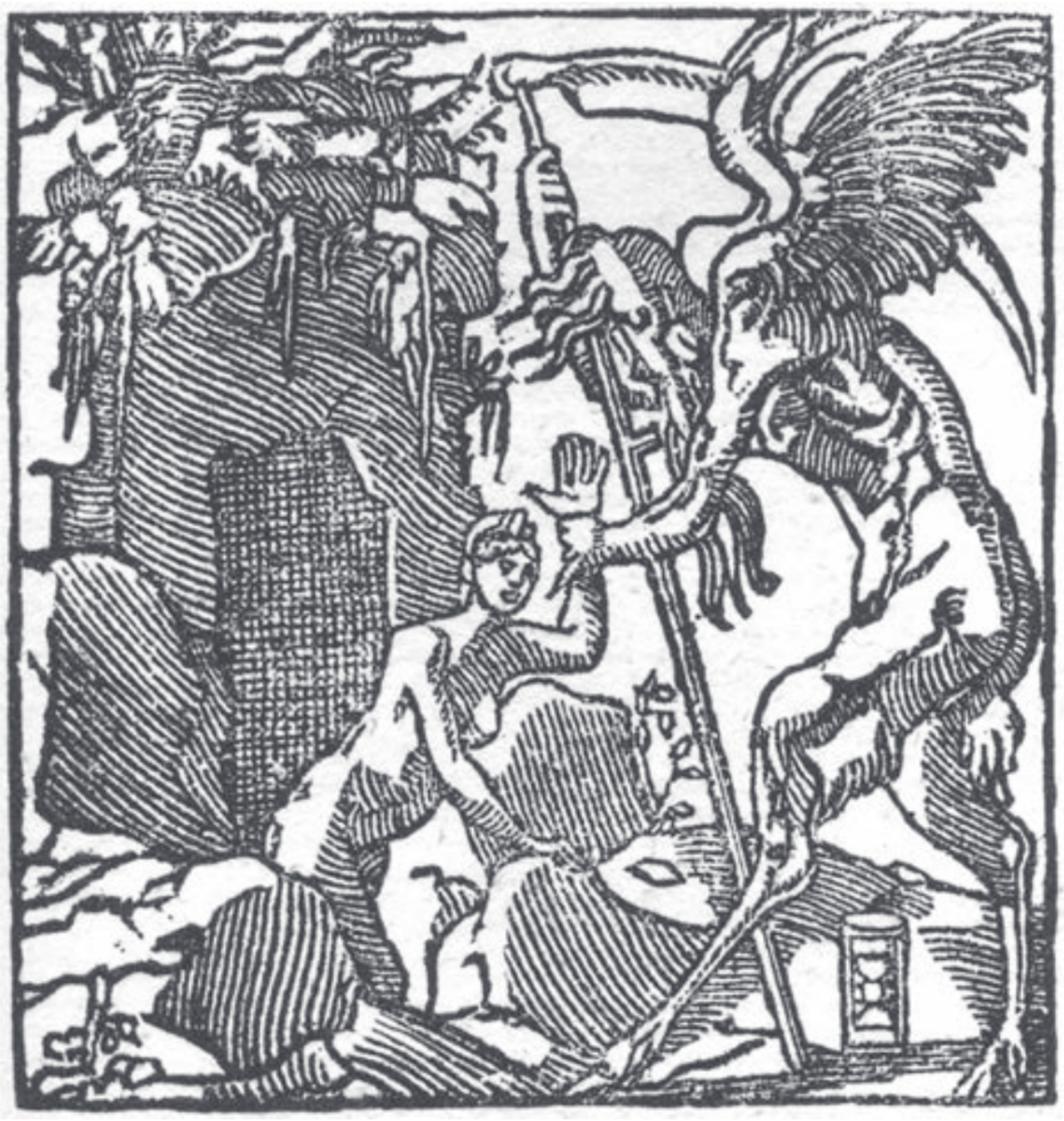


Fig. 3.2. Printer's device of Conrad Badius, Geneva: 'Truth' led from a cave by her father Time, *veritas filia temporis*. Courtesy of the Warburg Institute.

semper fuit aequa potestas.[24] Richeome insisted afterwards that the intended meaning of the device was irrelevant, for the ministers who designed it 'ont dict la veritê sans y penser'.[25] Each side, in search of the truth, found it in the visual narratives set forth by the other, and counted intentions for nothing. This was more than the simple exercise of ingenuity.

But Richeome did not stop at pictures, for it was not the visual image of Saturn, but the verbal image, the 'peinture parlante', that constituted the master-trope of his argument. The salient aspect of the pagan god, for Richeome, as for others, was his consumption of his own children. Conti had noted the classical interpretation of this aspect as time devouring the years, in keeping with his broader adoption of allegorical readings, a remnant of medieval practice — but he also emphasized the obscenity of the old gods: 'There was no crime, no villainy, no patricide from which those accounted gods recoiled, if they could accrue some benefit by it.'[26] By contrast to Conti's ambivalence about the interpretation of pagan material, in Richeome we hear a single voice, the pagan solely *as* pagan, that is, as the Satanic perversion of religious truth. Saturn, in his account, was the Devil's guise in inculcating the monstrous ritual of infant sacrifice, a practice highlighted and condemned in the Old Testament.[27] Since Protestantism is also diabolical, it must partake of the same crime, but in a new, spiritualized form. This form Richeome finds in the Calvinist teaching on infant baptism: by denying that unbaptized children are damned, Calvin and his successors allowed many such souls to be sent to their doom — a crime far worse than the mere corporal bloodshed of Tophet.

> Vous enseignez [...] que les enfans des Chrestiens sont sanctifiez au ventre de la Mere, et consequemment sont sauvez, encor qu'ils meurent sans Babtesme, par laquelle Doctrine, vous estes cause [...] que mille et mille Peres laissans mourir leurs enfans sans Sacrement, les ont privez, et privent encor de la vie eternelle, et les meurtrissent plus cruellement, que ne faisoient jadis les Peres Payens, mettans leurs enfans sur l'autel de Saturne [...].[28]

Richeome continues, long-windedly, his periods difficult to excerpt — the passage is typical of his style, but also of his content. Infant baptism was, like all the other doctrinal aspects of *L'Idolatrie huguenote*, a common talking-point of confessional dispute, and Richeome's arguments can be found in his peers' controversy handbooks, such as Guillaume Baile's 1607 *Catéchisme*.[29] He is, however, conversant with the sources to be refuted, and can quote Calvin's *Institutes* chapter and verse.

It was perhaps the very triteness and unoriginality of confessional argument on this and other topics that prompted Richeome to seek a new presentation of the material. He never makes explicit how literally his reader is to take the narrative of pagan idolatry and Calvinist heresy; but, at least on one level, his framework of pagan gods is certainly to be understood as a *theatrum*, a mnemonic system, equivalent to the schemes of imagery used and advocated in his earlier books. Keeping the Roman pantheon in mind — simple enough for anyone with a Jesuit education — the controversialist may easily recall the gamut of Protestant error: the denial of free will, the derivation of evil from God, the permission of sexual licence in the religious ministry, the rejection of the Real Presence, and of the authority of the Septuagint, and so on. Metaphor and narrative serve to make points of dispute more *vivid*, and to bring rhetorical colour to the truth; this extends beyond the figures of the gods themselves to their attributes and artistic representations. Mercury's caduceus, a diabolical parody of Moses' staff, drowses and awakens men, just as Calvinism, serpentine, venomous, lulls the believer into heresy, and stirs up civil conflict.[30] The theological contradictions apparent in the *Institutes* reflect the two sacred birds of Apollo, the swan and crow, day and night.[31] The Reformers' curiosity and sophistical cunning are figured by a statue of Apollo mentioned in Greek sources, with four ears, eyes and hands.[32] In further parallel with the statue, Richeome recounts a provincial folk-story:

> On dit, qu'il y a environ sept ans, qu'en une Eglise de la ville de Bordeaux fut surprins un larron à quatre mains; les deux estoient de bois revestues de gans lesquelles il tenoit devant la poictrine jointes vers le ciel: priant Dieu à genoux, avec grande demonstration de pieté, et faisoit jouër les deux naturelles soubs le manteau coupant les bourses de ses voisins, qui prioient aupres de luy.[33]

Even if the tale *isn't* true, Richeome asserts, 'il seroit bien feint pour exposer vos feintes'; all things, real and fictitious, come together in troping and typing the invisible faults of the Protestants. He would make the general principle explicit in his *Peinture spirituelle* of 1611.[34] These verbal images and reminiscences bring to life the abstractions of theological argument. But words, still more than pictures, are labile things, and to the extent that Richeome brought the resources of rhetoric to bear on his argument, Bansilion could turn the power of those resources against him, an intellectual *aikido*. In his preface the Calvinist announced his own method in classical terms, the ἀντιστρέφον mentioned by Aulus Gellius, an argument to be turned back against its master.[35] This is why he was not content to refute his opponent's theological points, rehashing half a century of polemical exchange, but sought also to reconstruct his own typology of pagan gods, now mapped onto the tenets and habits of the Catholic Church. We may say that *L'Idolatrie papistique* serves as a chamber of distorting mirrors for the imagery of *L'Idolatrie huguenote*.

In this way, after defending Calvinists from the charge of child sacrifice, and reasserting their position on the innocence of unbaptized infants, Bansilion turns Saturn against the papists: first he argues that the cruelty is rather in condemning innocent children to apparent perdition, and then he finds an echo of the pagan god's bloodthirsty worshippers in 'ces poures flagellans, qu'on appelle Battus ou Penitens, pensans faire un sacrifice aggreable à Dieu de leur sang', who 'transpercent leur peau et leur chair à grands coups de fouëts'.[36] When he moves to comment on Richeome's next chapter, it is this image, and not the lines of dogmatic controversy, which is left in the reader's mind. The grisly wit may seem an ill fit for theology, but it was no more alien here than it was in contemporary philosophy: Montaigne had drawn a similar comparison as a flourish to his essay on moderation.[37] And so it goes throughout the rest of Bansilion's book, matching image with image. The animals dedicated to Apollo — the crow and swan, together with the wolf and cock — are refigured, by their colours, as the four mendicant orders: the Franciscans and Augustinians, the Dominicans and Carmelites respectively.[38] The statue with four ears and hands is the Pope and his consistory, busying himself with affairs from the four corners of the world.[39] The caduceus is overlooked, but Mercury himself, as the god of eloquence, matches the vain and empty rhetoric of the Jesuits, and, as the god of thieves, stands in for affected mendicancy and the trafficking of religious goods.[40] Throughout the book, Bansilion claims that his own analogies are less forced than those advanced by Richeome, as for instance with Mars:

> Et quant aux sacrifices qui estoient offerts au dieu Mars, il n'est ia besoin que nous recerchions ici des Allegories, comme a fait nostre Jesuite pour les nous appliquer, car ils conviennent selon la lettre mesme à leur idole Mars, c'est à dire au Pape de Rome.

Nonetheless, his procedure is much the same as his opponent's:

> La couleur propre à Mars estoit la couleur rouge, comme representant le sang; c'est aussi de ceste couleur que l'Evesque de Rome est notamment paré, lors qu'il est consacré.[41]

Bansilion is more concerned than Richeome to demarcate metaphor or allegory from literal expression. The Jesuit had been outraged at Théodore de Bèze's description of Calvin as 'le Soleil du monde' and 'la plus grande lumiere, qui fut en ce monde pour l'addresse de l'Eglise de Dieu', since it blasphemously conferred upon the Reformer the honours due to Christ himself.[42] At this Bansilion has to laugh: 'Il se pleind que Calvin soit appellé par Beze Soleil ou lumiere: comme si ce n'estoit point une Metaphore qu'on applique d'ordinaire à ceux, qui ont esclairci quelque science!'[43] For the Calvinist it was *only* a metaphor, not to be taken literally, just as Badius's device had been *only* a device; but for Richeome religious language was no game, and the use of metaphor had serious theological implications. It would be a mistake, then, to think that Richeome intended his gallery of gods merely as a playful or artistic setting for the *mouelle substantifique* of his doctrines. Rather, imagery has a special privilege, bordering on the mystical — hence his description of the Saturn device as a 'figure mystique'.

With this in mind, we may return to the disagreement which underpins the two books as a whole: the nature of the idol, and its relationship to the image, a core aspect of early modern confessional dispute, with the Jesuits at the vanguard of the action by the 1590s.[44] Both writers, following their ekphrases of the title page, dwell on the issue at length. Richeome's account draws heavily on Gregorio de Valencia's *De idololatria* (1580), itself an apologetic response to the Lutheran professor Jakob Heerbrand.[45] Although the Jesuit wants sharply to distinguish idol and image, he is not quite steady in his handling: first the idol is offered as a species of the image, and then the two are placed in opposition, the one bad, the other good.[46] It is as if he is uneasy with the very *terms* of the debate, set by the Protestants. Indeed, the distinction shifts around in his own metaphorical economy. He later asserts that if a man, following Calvinist doctrine,

> n'a point de liberté, point de volonté franche, s'il n'est maistre de ses actions: s'il agit par contrainte, et est mené esclave par impetuosité de sa nature, il n'est pas homme; sinon en figure c'est une Idole d'homme, ayant seulement les lineamens exterieurs d'homme, et le dedans d'un cheval ou d'une autre beste.[47]

Where man is in fact the 'image' of God, if he lacked free will, he would be reduced to an 'idol'; the polarity of good and bad holds between the two words, but now the 'idol' is an unsignifying image, not an image signifying a false god. That man *is* the image of God, and not thereby an idol, constitutes one of Richeome's chief arguments against the Calvinist conflation; and precisely the same point was made by his contemporary Jean Gontery.[48] Doctrine and method are here united, for the images to be saved are also the spiritual tropes which structure Richeome's book. With the value of imagery ring-fenced, idolatry expands backward in its denotation, via the idea of 'spiritual idolatry', to become a virtual synonym of heresy: 'il n'y a aucun erreur, qui mieux porte la naifve semblance de L'Idolatrie payenne en ses causes, effects, et qualitez que faict l'Heresie.'[49]

For Bansilion, by contrast, there is no reliable distinction between image and idol. 'Idolatry', for a Protestant, is much safer ground as a trope for error than 'heresy', the traditional Catholic device. In moving from heresy to idolatry, Richeome, far from appropriating his enemies' weapon, has made himself vulnerable to all the usual attacks. Thus Bansilion opens with a stock comparison of the Catholic cult of saints to pagan polytheism.[50] Again, Catholic sacramental theology confuses the real object with its sign or image, and worships the vehicle in place of the tenor — a silent parallel for Richeome's failure to distinguish metaphor from literal expression.[51] Meanwhile, the narrative of the Devil reforming the idols of paganism among the Christians is a much better fit for the early corruption of the Catholic Church, and Bansilion opens his prefatory address with the standard simile of the Antichrist as the *Singe de Dieu*, another trope put on the table by Richeome.[52]

The problem for Richeome was fundamental, for beneath his rich typology of pagan gods lay a philosophical problem of signification. The notion of idolatry itself was an attempt to articulate this problem, but in it lay the germ of Bansilion's response. The Calvinist's achievement was not simply to counter Richeome's argument, but undermine the very language used to convey his claims.

⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆

Theology has always been a discipline concerned with absolute truth, not the contingencies of its telling. But Christianity emerged from the wreckage of antiquity as a patchwork of truths and metaphors, doctrine and narrative; and it was left to scholasticism, from the age of Peter Lombard onward, to strip away the literary and produce a formal system of theological truth. The success of this effort was remarkable: despite the odd skirmish here and there, consensus was achieved on key points throughout Europe for several centuries. By the time of the Reformation, the tropes and stories of Christianity had become so well worn that they did not look like anything but obvious truths — from the founding of the Mass to the Donation of Constantine. But with Valla on one side, and Calvin and Luther on the other, truths began to look again like stories, the work not of God but of man, venal and corrupt, and ripe for the plucking. Reform, textual as well as ecclesiastical, thus brought with it a crisis of meaning, a new border dispute between literal and figurative expression in religious matters.

Richeome's *oeuvre* was a product of this crisis: far from seeking a rigorous exposition of theological doctrine, he embraced metaphor as a bright path to truth, multiplying and elaborating the stock of figuration available to Catholic apologists. The result was spectacular, and highly valued by some; a Latin version of *L'Idolatrie* appeared in 1613, for the faithful in Germany.[53] As Bansilion showed him, however, his opponents could profit as much as his friends from his imagination. In denying Richeome authority over his iconography, and his language, the Calvinist taught him a valuable lesson. It is perhaps no coincidence that, when Richeome responded in turn, in his 1610 *Le Panthéon huguenot*, he abandoned his use of pagan imagery, beyond the title and a few headings, and focused almost exclusively on doctrine. Bansilion, his work done, was nowhere to be seen.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. For a biography and overview of Richeome, see Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 12 vols (Louvain, 1960), VI, cols 1815–31, and Henri Brémond, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*, I: *L'Humanisme dévot (1580–1660)* (Paris, 1924), pp. 19–67, a rather one-sided account. As Brémond notes, the Maldonado connection is important; on this figure, see Henri Fouqueray, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus en France des origines à la suppression (1528–1762)*, 5 vols (Paris: Librairie Alphonse Picard et fils, 1910–22), I, 366–71. Richeome mentions him in *L'Idolatrie huguenote figuree au patron de la vieille payenne* (Rouen, 1608), p. 286.
2. Marc Fumaroli, *L'Âge de l'éloquence: Rhétorique et 'res literaria' de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique*, 3rd edn (Geneva: Droz, 2002), pp. 257–58.
3. Gauvin Bailey, *Between Renaissance and Baroque: Jesuit Art in Rome, 1565–1610* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 48–61; Natacha Sallot, 'Les Pouvoirs de l'image dans le discours apologétique: Les *Tableaux sacrez* de Louis Richeome', in *Pouvoirs de l'image aux XVe, XVIe et*

XVIIe siècles: Pour un nouvel éclairage sur la pratique des lettres à la Renaissance, ed. by Marie Couton et al. (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2009), 257–73; but especially Ralph Dekoninck, *Ad imaginem: Statuts, fonctions et usages de l'image dans la littérature spirituelle jésuite du XVIIe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 2005), pp. 67–82, with further bibliography at p. 68, n. 153.

4. Fouqueray, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus*, iii, 170–71.
5. See, for instance, Calvin's *Traité des reliques* (1543), or his *De vitandis superstitionibus* (1551).
6. Cyprian, *De unitate ecclesiae*, §2; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XVIII.51.
7. François de Croy, *Les Trois conformités, assavoir, L'harmonie et convenance de l'Eglise Romaine avec le Paganisme, Judaisme et heresies anciennes* ([Geneva], 1605).
8. Jacques Solé, *Le Débat entre protestants et catholiques français de 1598 à 1685*, 4 vols (Lille: Amateurs, 1985), ii, 728–93; Bernard Dompnier, 'L'Eglise Romaine, conservatoire des religions antiques: La Critique Protestante du cultes des saints et des images au XVIIe siècle', in *Les Religions du paganisme antique dans l'Europe chrétienne XVIe–XVIIe siècle, Colloque tenu en Sorbonne les 26–27 mai 1987* (Paris, 1988), pp. 51–68.
9. David Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), pp. 273–88.
10. Jean-Baptiste de Glen, *Histoire pontificale* (Liège, 1600), p. 229.
11. François de La Mothe Le Vayer, 'Rapports de l'histoire profane à la sainte', in his *Œuvres*, 3 vols (Paris, 1662), iii, 800.
12. Fouqueray, *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus*, ii, 612–14; Claude Sutto, 'Le Père Louis Richeome et le nouvel esprit politique des Jésuites français (XVIe–XVIIe s.)', in *Les Jésuites parmi les hommes aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles*, ed. by G. Demerson, B. Dompnier and A. Regond (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses de l'APFLC, 1987), pp. 175–84.
13. Richeome, *L'Idolatrie*, sig. ē2^{v}.
14. Ibid., p. 40.
15. 'Discours des images', in *Trois discours pour la religion Catholique* (Bordeaux, 1598), p. 622.
16. Richeome, 'Exposition du triomphe de l'Eglise sur L'Idolatrie et sur l'heresie', in *L'Idolatrie*, sigs ē7^{r}–ī1^{v}.
17. Jean Bansilion, *L'Idolatrie papistique opposee en response à L'Idolatrie huguenote de Louis Richeome* (Geneva, 1608), sigs A8^{v}–B2^{v}.
18. Robert Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 243–44.
19. Dekoninck, *Ad imaginem*, p. 78.
20. Bansilion, *L'Idolatrie*, sig. B1^{v}.
21. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. by James Engell and Walter Jackson Bate, 2 vols (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 1983), i, 164: 'I regard truth as a divine ventriloquist: I care not from whose mouth the sounds are supposed to proceed'.
22. The emblem is catalogued in Louis Catherine Silvestre, *Marques typographiques*, 2 vols (Paris, 1853–67), i, no. 485, and, as an English device, in Ronald McKerrow, *Printers' & Publishers' Devices in England & Scotland, 1485–1640* (London: Chiswick Press, 1913), no. 312. See also Helen Shaw, *Conrad Badius and the Comedie du pape malade* (Philadelphia : Westbrook, 1934), p. 53, who labels the principal figure 'a curious blend of Saturn and Pan', and, on the motto and its attendant imagery, Fritz Saxl, 'Veritas Filia Temporis', in *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*, ed. by Raymond Klibansky and H. J. Paton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 197–296.
23. Richeome, *L'Idolatrie*, pp. 354–56.
24. Bansilion, *L'Idolatrie*, p. 356, quoting *Ars poetica*, ll. 9–10.
25. Richeome, *Le Pantheon huguenot decouvert et ruiné* (Cambray, 1610), p. 247.
26. Natale Conti, *Mythologiae sive explicationum fabularum libri x* (Venice, 1581), pp. 76: 'Nullum fuit scelus, nullum latrocinium, nullum patricidium, a quo isti, qui Dei habiti sunt, abhorruerint, modo aliquam prae se tulerit commoditatem.' Cf. p. 82.
27. Richeome, *L'Idolatrie*, pp. 350–53.
28. Ibid., p. 357.
29. Guillaume Baile, *Le Catéchisme et abbrégé des controverses de nostre temps* (Bordeaux, 1608), pp. 200–05.

30. Richeome, *L'Idolatrie*, pp. 562, 576.
31. Ibid., p. 427. Richeome notes, for instance, p. 422, a contradiction on whether the body of Christ is present in the Eucharist, in the various sections of Calvin's *Institutes*, IV.17.
32. Richeome does not name a source; it is not in Conti, but see, for instance, Erasmus, *Adagia*, I.3.8 ('Eum ausculta, cui quatuor sunt aures'), and Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, *De deis gentium libri* (Lyon, 1565), p. 190.
33. Richeome, *L'Idolatrie*, pp. 496–97.
34. Cf. Dekoninck, *Ad imaginem*, p. 70: 'l'auteur fait feu de tout bois, la moindre chose "dépeinte" étant prétexte à tirer [...] un enseignement moral et spirituel.'
35. *Noctes atticae* V.10, concerning a lawsuit brought by the sophist Protagoras against his student Euathlus. Lorenzo Valla took up the case in his *Repastinatio dialecticae et philosophiae*, and after him it was received into the mainstream of Renaissance rhetoric; see Lodi Nauta, *In Defense of Common Sense: Lorenzo Valla's Humanist Critique of Scholastic Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 255–65. On the term ἀντιστρέφον in its historical context, see Gabriel Nuchelmans, *Dilemmatic Arguments: Towards a History of their Logic and Rhetoric* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1991), pp. 64–66.
36. Bansilion, *L'Idolatrie*, p. 359.
37. Michel de Montaigne, 'De la moderation', in his *Essais*, ed. by Jean Balsamo, Michel Magnien and Catherine Magnien-Simonin (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), pp. 206–08.
38. Bansilion, *L'Idolatrie*, p. 394
39. Ibid., p. 393.
40. Ibid., pp. 418–20.
41. Ibid., p. 369.
42. Richeome, *L'Idolatrie*, pp. 408–10, citing Théodore de Bèze, 'Vie de Calvin', composed for the French version of Calvin's commentary on Joshua, and published individually in 1564.
43. Bansilion, *L'Idolatrie*, pp. 370–71.
44. Solé, *Le Débat*, III, 1256–98; Dekoninck, *Ad imaginem*, esp. pp. 26–27.
45. Gregorio de Valencia, *De idololatria contra sectariorum contumelias disputatio* (Ingolstadt, 1580), cited in Richeome, *L'Idolatrie*, p. 5.
46. Richeome, *L'Idolatrie*, sigs $\mathrm{A}4^{\mathrm{v}}$–5^{r}, and pp. 5–13.
47. Ibid., p. 451.
48. Jean Gontery, *La Response à la demande d'un gentil-homme* (Paris, 1608), pp. 6–8.
49. Richeome, *L'Idolatrie*, p. 31.
50. Bansilion, *L'Idolatrie*, pp. 14–17, and cf., e.g. Croy, *Les Trois conformités*, pp. 51–53.
51. Ibid., pp. 71–80. The idolatry of the Eucharist, a classic charge against Rome, had been the first to be pushed back by De Valencia, *De idololatria*, pp. 17–26.
52. Ibid., p. 322.
53. Richeome, *Idololatria huguenotica, seu Luthero-Calvinistica ad exemplar ethnicae veteris expressa*, trans. by Marcellin Bompard (Mainz, 1613).

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CHAPTER 4

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The Book of Nature and the Book of Metaphors

Alexander Roose

> De ma façon d'écrire, je n'en dirai qu'un mot: je tâche d'écrire nettement et sans déguisement de métaphores, tant qu'il nous est possible. Je sais que la chose est malaisée...; car je pense qu'il est des métaphores comme des femmes, c'est un mal nécessaire...
>
> François Garasse,
> *La Somme théologique des vérités capitales de la religion chrétienne*, 1625.

According to Stoic philosophers, only a wise man is truly capable of seeing himself as a minuscule part of the universe. Such self-reflection allows the sage, even in times of extreme adversity, to focus his attention on his real position in the world. To achieve this kind of detached wisdom, an apprentice philosopher should not only turn to ethics and dialectics (or logic), but also to physics.[1] An echo of this 'curriculum' is to be found in the well-known chapter that Montaigne devotes to his conception of the ideal manner in which to educate a child. For Montaigne, only a man who can picture in his mind 'cette grande image de nostre mere nature en son entiere magesté; qui lit en son visage une si generale et constante variété; qui se remarque là dedans, et non soy, mais tout un royaume, comme un traict d'une poincte tres delicate', can reckon things at their real size.[2]

Montaigne's and Descartes's Book of Nature

The wise man is not only the critical spectator of his own existence; he is aware of the vastness of the cosmos and understands the contingency of man. Montaigne's pupil must thus learn that this 'grand monde, que les uns multiplient encore comme especes soubs un genre, c'est le miroüer, où il nous faut regarder, pour nous cognoistre de bon biais. Somme je veux que ce soit le livre de mon escolier'.[3] In gazing into the looking-glass and in reading the book of Nature, the apprentice philosopher will grasp his own identity. However, Montaigne then proceeds to elaborate a more moralistic view of 'le monde', inviting his pupil to explore the world of ruined kingdoms and faded lustre. In so doing, the pupil acknowledges human shortcomings and weaknesses. In the 'Apologie de Raymond Sebon', Montaigne notes that physics does not offer any consolation for the fallibility of the human condition, as the theories of the Stoic philosophers, the followers of Aristotle, the admirers of Ptolemy, and Montaigne's near-contemporary Copernicus all contradict one another. Hence Montaigne focuses on an ethical reading of the 'book of the world', and leaves out scientific theory.

The metaphor of the 'book of the world' is echoed in Descartes's *Discours de la méthode* as a means of describing the author's intellectual journey. As a young man, Descartes shared with his contemporaries an obsessive interest in rhetoric and literature.[4] However, he gradually began to question and subvert the humanist enterprise of finding guidance for modern life in ancient texts. He felt that humanist philosophers and scientists were building their theories on shaky foundations, making a habit of collecting anecdotes and fables from all kinds of sources to enrich their interventions in public debates.[5] Descartes reports that he has failed to find certain knowledge and methodically established truth in the books that he has been studying. For this reason, he states, he has decided 'de ne chercher plus autre science, que celle qui se pourrait trouver en moi-même ou bien dans le grand livre du monde'.[6] Henceforth, he will look for certainty and truth both within himself and in the 'book of the world'. Descartes is thus using the same metaphor as Montaigne, yet what might appear to be a resemblance between the two ends here, for Descartes is radically separating the self and the world: in his view, the self cannot be studied by gazing at the universe through a looking-glass. 'Après que j'eus employé quelques années à étudier ainsi dans le livre du monde et à tâcher d'acquérir quelque expérience, je pris un jour résolution d'étudier aussi en moi-même, et d'employer toutes les forces de mon esprit à choisir les chemins que je devais suivre.'[7] Rejecting the principles of what he regarded as a sterile humanist education, Descartes starts reading the book of Nature and studying the world through a real telescope. He launches investigations based on experiment and only then does he turn his attention inwards, drawing on the 'forces de l'esprit', his intellect and his imagination. In 1637, the year in which he published the *Discours de la méthode*, Descartes enthuses over the discoveries made thanks to the telescope, as he explains at the beginning of *Dioptrics*:

> Toute la conduite de notre vie dépend de nos sens, entre lesquels celui de la vue étant le plus universel et le plus noble, il n'y a point de doute que les inventions qui servent à augmenter sa puissance ne soient des plus utiles qui puissent être. Et il est malaisé d'en trouver aucune qui l'augmente plus que celle de ces merveilleuses lunettes, qui n'étant en usage que depuis peu, nous ont déjà découvert de nouveaux astres dans le ciel et d'autres nouveaux objets sur la terre, en plus grand nombre que ne sont ceux que nous y avions vus auparavant.[8]

Thanks to our sight, to our capacity for wonderment and admiration, and to the extraordinary invention that is the telescope, humanity has been able to discover a multitude of new stars and objects of which it was previously ignorant. Nevertheless, in spite of such discoveries, along with his newfound understanding of the nature of light and of the laws of motion, and his newly acquired views on meteors and the universe, Descartes feels compelled to turn his attention inwards and to reflect upon his inner self.

Tesauro's Book on Metaphors

A book published in 1654 by the Jesuit Emanuele Tesauro sheds a baroque light on this epistemological turn. In his *Entretiens* published in 1671, the Jesuit Dominique Bouhours repeatedly discusses and criticizes the ideas developed by his Jesuit colleagues, Emanuele Tesauro and Baltasar Gracián. Their books became very popular in France. Gracián's difficult phrasing in particular required translation. His *Oráculo manual* was published in a French translation by Amelot de La Houssaie in 1684. Tesauro's *Il Cannocchiale aristotelico* was reprinted eight times between 1654 and 1679. In its 1663 and 1670 editions, it comes accompanied by an extraordinary frontispiece depicting a surprising image.[9] A bearded philosopher — Aristotle, as the name written on one of the folds of his gown tells us — is helping a young woman — 'Poesis', whose name is carved in the *vielle* she is holding at her side — to observe the black spots on the Sun, through what appears to be an elegant and very well-crafted telescope. It is in fact a *cannocchiale*: the instrument used by the astronomer Galileo to observe the movement of planets, the twinkling stars and the moon. In the image of the frontispiece, Galileo's tube, with its two powerful lenses, is handled by Aristotle. The frontispiece thus suggests, quite paradoxically, that Poesis should follow the indications by Aristotle in order to detect the imperfections of Creation. However, many thinkers of the Renaissance and early modern Europe had argued that Aristotle was not a reliable guide.[10] To Montaigne, for example, the repeated references made to the 'Dieu de la science scholastique'[11] by some of his pedantic contemporaries are a clear sign of ignorance. And the abandoned standards of the once-glorious Roman army displayed in the foreground of the frontispiece of Tesauro's *Cannocchiale* contribute to the image's underlying suggestion of the superiority of modern culture. Tesauro, however, refuses to conform to this dominant anti-Aristotelian trend. In his conception of rhetoric, Aristotle's views on metaphors are fundamentally still a valid approach to understanding the world and the self.

Tesauro's treatise begins with a reflection on the essence of the art of rhetoric.[12] Paradoxically we admire rhetoric, the true spirit of 'shrewdness and subtlety', welcoming it as a singular miracle — we know the angels, Nature and the Almighty use it when they speak to us — but the origins of this finesse remain obscure, its essence unknown, its technique unintelligible. Homer masters the techniques that made it possible to achieve beauty and obtain the admiration of his audience, yet in spite of this he is unable to define the finesse he himself deploys. And Cicero, who studied rhetoric in detail and to whom such finesse came naturally, seems incapable of defining it, try as he might. Rhetoric, Tesauro claims, is like the Nile, whose course we know, but not its source. But, the 'divine Aristotle' encourages us in taking up this pursuit: he examined the secrets of rhetoric with meticulous care. His books can be considered a 'luminous telescope', 'un *limpidissimo cannocchiale*', enabling anyone to examine the perfections and the imperfections of rhetoric.

A very large part of the *Cannocchiale* is devoted to the figure Tesauro considers as 'the mother of poetry': the metaphor.[13] Tesauro distinguishes three kinds of metaphor: the simple metaphor, the metaphysical proposition (or allegory), and the

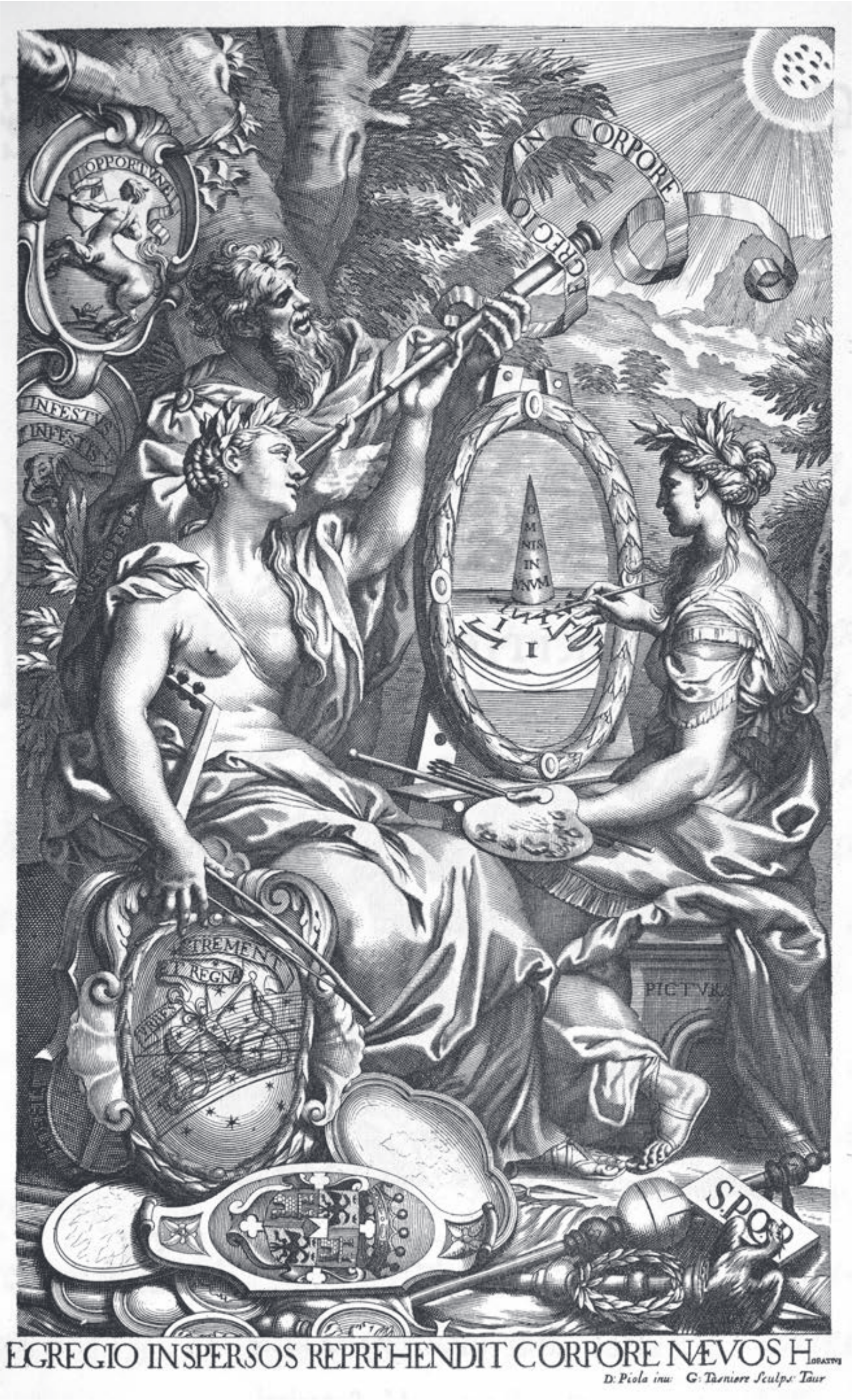
OPPORTVNE
EGREGIO IN CORPORE
INFESTVS INFESTIS
OMNIS IN VNVM
EXTREMENT ET REGNA
PICTVR
S.P.Q.R
EGREGIO INSPERSOS REPREHENDIT CORPORE NÆVOS HORATIVS
D: Piola inu: G: Tasniere Sculps: Taur

Fig. 4.1. Frontispiece used in the 1663 and 1670 editions of Tesauro's *Il Cannocchiale aristotelico*

metaphysical argument. These correspond to the three operations of the intellect: apprehension, judgement, and syllogistic reasoning. The intellect receives the images of the object and combines them to forge propositions in order to formulate a conclusion through syllogistic reasoning. Tesauro combines simple metaphor and allegory to propose eight further types: likeness (*simiglianza*), metonymy or synecdoche (*attributione*), punning (*equivoco*), hypotyposis (*hipotiposi*), hyperbole (*hiperboli*), laconism (*laconismo*), opposition or antithesis (*oppositione*), and deception (*decettione*).[14] Metaphor is the most incisive of all figures. Its purpose is more than just ornamental; it does not remain on the grammatical surface of words but penetrates and explores the most abstract notions, so that it may combine them and, in so doing, it turns words into concepts.[15] According to Tesauro, Aristotle shows that the orator who creates metaphors must be of perspicacious and sharp intelligence.[16] Yet in Tesauro's system, the successful combination of remote concepts, the discovery of relationships between things, is not a result of the thoughtful use of Aristotelian topics and categories, but a consequence of the poetic genius of the orator. Renaissance philosophers focus on the finding of arguments, *inventio*, by working with collections of topics, storehouses of knowledge or shortcuts into these storehouses. But the speeches delivered by lawyers and judges, informed by these books, are boring and banal, as Guillaume Du Vair argues, and 'à peine pouvoit-on bien prendre le fil de [leur] oraison'.[17] So as not to lose the audience, an orator has to reconsider the art of *inventio*, avoid 'abundance' and use commonplace books with moderation. An even more radical solution is advanced by Tesauro. The baroque philosopher sets out not only to refute the efficiency of the topical method but also to explore a different way of reasoning. The *ars inveniendi* becomes a matter of good taste and is no longer based on the logical coherence between the elements of the premises. The audience will only be convinced by the imaginative work of a particularly creative mind: as a consequence it is not reason but ingenuity and sharpness that become the principal issue. Only an inventive poet is capable of attracting the attention of the public with something new, something admirable, such as an unexpected similarity:

> *Ingenium* instead of reason, adaptable acute speech instead of rational speech, i.e., the *circumstantiae* are the original source of our view of things. With this there is a complete reversal of scientific thought. Rhetoric suddenly has a new fundamental function.[18]

Metaphors and Thinking: Copernicus and Descartes at Work

Du Vair argues that French lawyers are failing to take into consideration the effect of their rhetorical choices on their audience. In his defence of Guez de Balzac, Descartes holds that the latter's stylistic 'vehemence and natural passion', combined 'with the elegance and ornamentation of modern times', were a new standard of elegant eloquence.[19] However, Descartes is not so much defending Guez de Balzac as identifying the worthiest features of rhetorical practice, those which induce a heightened 'attentiveness' on the part of the hearers or readers.[20] A baroque philosopher is not so much interested in conveying clear and distinct ideas as in provoking the delight of the audience. Tesauro's views on the power of the creative imagination of the orator imply a theory of affects and passions: the admiration the audience experiences after considering the novelty and the unique strangeness of the figure is the fruit of the tension between the sharpness of an astute representation and the unexpected image of the represented object. In the image of *Il Cannocchiale*'s frontispiece, Aristotle shows Poesis how to look, where to look. He frees her from her boredom: it becomes clear that she is revelling in the pleasure of learning, delighted by the skills the poet teaches her and by her recent discoveries. She admires both the sunspots she has never seen before and the instrument that allows her to see them. Similarly, the spectator will admire the genius of the orator, and while 'seeing' the mental image which is presented to him, he too will meditate upon the implications of metaphor, as it condenses a variety of ideas into a single word or phrase and gives new meaning both to *the signifier and the signified*.

The smallest change in the wording of a metaphor has unexpected consequences for the audience's thought process. When for instance the orator says that 'the meadows are charming' (*prata amoena sunt*), this will not engender the same reaction as when he suggests that 'the meadows are laughing' (*prata rident*).[21] The metaphor of the 'laughing meadows' transforms Earth into a person, the meadows being his face, his smile corresponding to the charm of nature. Indeed, once the audience has heard this metaphor, they will consider the human face in a different way, superimposing the notion of the 'laughing meadows' onto it. The features of one notion will become the features of the other, and vice versa. It is thus possible to discover in a single word a whole theatre of wonder: 'vedere in un Vocabulo solo, un pien teatro di meraviglie.'[22] The metaphor is thought-provoking: in combining two distinct notions or things it not only informs the audience about the 'metaphorized' object but causes the spectators to rethink their terms, reorganizing and exploring reality. In this way metaphor does not serve a purely ornamental purpose, but has also become an efficient epistemological tool.[23] Using metaphors implies rational thought, just as truly creative and original thought implies the concomitant creation of metaphors.

Aristotle himself asserts that metaphorical reasoning applies to philosophy, which requires the 'speculative capacity to observe the similarity even in very mutually remote things'.[24] In the same way, one could argue that Copernicus's heliocentric hypothesis is an extended metaphor. In his famous anonymous preface to Copernicus's *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium*, Osiander presents the Copernican hypothesis as a pleasant fiction: 'For these hypotheses need not be true nor even probable. On the contrary, if they provide a calculus consistent with the observations, that alone is enough.'[25] The reader is invited to abandon his or her scientific reservations and to accept a new but beautifully coherent hypothesis. Although he goes on to assert the validity of his own findings, providing an overt contradiction to this introductory letter, Copernicus also thereby underscores the metaphorical power of his own argument. In his prefatory epistle to *De revolutionibus* he claims that the first and foremost merit of his system is that it is more harmonious and beautiful than existing astronomical theories, unable as they are to

> elicit or deduce [...] the principal consideration, that is, the structure of the

> universe and the true symmetry of its parts. On the contrary, their experience was just like someone taking from various places hands, feet, a head, and other pieces, very well depicted, it may be, but not for a representation of a single person: since these fragments would not belong to one another at all, a monster rather than a man would be put together from them.[26]

Copernicus is suggesting that the figurative thinking of his adversaries is poor and that the monstrous strangeness of their tentative intellectual work reveals the inaccuracy of their insights. Fernand Hallyn has explained at length how indebted to rhetoric Copernicus's methods were, not least in that he considered, in a truly neo-Platonic vein, the centrality of the Sun to be a symbol of God, the governor of the universe. While referring to Hermes Trismegistus and echoing Pico della Mirandola, the 'modern scientist',[27] Copernicus describes the Sun 'in the middle of everything', asserting that it is 'appropriately called by some people the lantern of the universe, its mind by others, and its ruler by still others'.[28] The Copernican construct formulates a truth based on relationships which quite literally have no objective existence, and to which a vast majority of scientists who were still clinging to the Aristotelian model could not attribute a positive status.[29] It abolishes the distinction between science and rhetoric, between the abstract and the concrete, between literal and figurative truths. And this practice seems widespread. Although Descartes, for instance, has, unlike Copernicus, a *limpidissimo cannocchiale* at his disposal, his writings include several examples of metaphorical thinking. This use of analogy makes it possible to establish links between things as far removed from one another as a machine and Nature; it even allows the philosopher, or the physicist, when thinking of a machine and observing what can be seen to imagine what remains invisible, beneath the surface:

> Toutes les choses qui sont artificielles, sont avec cela naturelles. Car, par exemple, lorsqu'une montre marque les heures par le moyen des roues dont elle est faite, cela ne lui est pas moins naturel qu'il est à un arbre de produire des fruits. C'est pourquoi, en même façon qu'un horloger, en voyant une montre qu'il n'a point faite, peut ordinairement juger, de quelques-unes de ses parties qu'il regarde, quelles sont toutes les autres qu'il ne voit pas: ainsi en considérant les effets et les parties sensibles des corps naturels, j'ai tâché de connaître quelles doivent être celles de leurs parties qui sont invisibles.[30]

In this way, Descartes deploys a technique similar to that used by the watchmaker who is able to imagine the whole mechanism of a watch from just a few pieces. He is able to discuss the secrets of Nature without having seen them, without gazing into a telescope; he is able to unveil what has been hidden, exerting the full powers of his creative imagination. In a sense this 'metaphorical' leap proves its own epistemological power in making it possible to overcome any physical boundary. Aristotle is holding the *cannocchiale*, allowing Descartes to see what is invisible and to reflect upon the parts of Nature that he cannot see.

To Observe with the Eye, to Contemplate with the Mind: Tesauro and Pascal

In Tesauro's system, the visual aspects of metaphor are fundamental. Returning to the engraving that serves as the *Cannocchiale aristotelico*'s frontispiece, we find the depiction of another woman beside Poesis: Pictura. We have already seen how, through the use of the telescope she is manipulating, Poesis is observing the black spots on the surface of the Sun. Pictura, seated before an easel, is working on a picture; illustrating, encoding and deciphering the maxim 'omnis in unum', revealing the workings of the anamorphosis 'all in one'.[31] She is creating a pictorial representation of the way in which Aristotle helps Poesis in her reflection and understanding. To the author of the *Cannocchiale aristotelico*, observing with the eye and contemplating with the mind are two analogous methods of cognition and comprehension: 'Perche il mirar con gli occhi, & il contemplar con l'Intelletto, son due specie Analoghe di Conoscenza.'[32] In a sense, this bipartition echoes Pascal's famous distinction between *l'esprit de finesse* and *l'esprit géométrique*, according to which geometric principles are palpable, clear and coherent yet removed from common use: 'Il faudrait avoir tout à fait l'esprit faux pour mal raisonner sur des principes si gros.' In contrast, the foundations of *l'esprit de finesse* are 'dans l'usage commun et devant les yeux de tout le monde' (L512).[33] *L'esprit géométrique* requires precision, method and the definition of premises as they become proofs. The intuitive mind does not proceed like the mathematical mind. No scientific proof or reasoning is needed: one has only to look and one will understand in the blink of an eye: 'Il faut tout d'un coup voir la chose d'un seul regard et non pas par progrès de raisonnement au moins jusqu'à un certain degré' (L512).

In order to understand the world, Pascal thus combines the outlook of *l'esprit de finesse* and the rigour of *l'esprit de géométrie*; the intuitive, intimate, artistic path and the impersonal, scientific, mathematical one. In his *Pensées*, he emphasizes that the first task of rhetoric is to 'faire voir' (L199): 'eloquence is a painting of thought' (L578). In the same way, in the *Cannocchiale aristotelico*, metaphor operates like the technical apparatus of a theatre. It allows us to see what no one has ever seen before: the animated forest, the singing birds evoked by Orpheus. It functions in the same way that perspective functions in a painting. It is an optical instrument that shows one object in another.[34] The interpenetration of objects thus creates a productive illusion, a transformation of reality that allows the spectator to transcend the banality of the real and to reach a higher level of cognition. Poesis discovers the dark spots on the surface of the Sun and thus understands, thanks to Aristotle's telescope, that even the most perfect bodies, the most luminous stars, are tarnished by imperfections. From this moment on, she is to form a better idea of what constitutes real perfection, spotless beauty: a quality that she can never achieve in practice but that she may begin to understand through theory and contemplation, by defining perfection through the study of imperfection.

To See the Unseen, to Think the Unthinkable: Tesauro, Galileo and Pascal

Gifted people make us see things we would not or could not see without them, explains Tesauro. The subtle creations of painters, sculptors and architects make the spectator believe what would previously have seemed unbelievable.[35] Optics unveils by virtue of the structures of perspective things one normally does not see.[36] Thanks to Zacharie Jansen, the Dutch inventor who placed two small optical mirrors in an empty cane, human vision envisages where no bird can fly. Thanks to such ingenuity, 'one can cross the sea without observing the stars, one can examine the dark spots on the Sun, the mountains and the seas on the Moon, count the offspring of Jupiter'.[37]

In the dedicatory epistle and in the final sections of the *Siderius Nuncius* (1610), Galileo does indeed describe his discovery of the 'four little stars', the four satellites of Jupiter, using his telescope. Galileo is keen to report the experimental basis of his findings and reluctant to recognize that the Copernican revolution was not entirely based on extensive experimentation. In his *Considerations* of 1615 he remains adamant that the findings of Copernicus were based on 'true and physically real observations of the movement of the stars — observations without which it would have been impossible to attain this level of knowledge'.[38] Furthermore, he emphasizes that Copernicus is not just showing the rhetorical inefficiency of the cosmological model of the Ancients, nor that his hypothesis of the movement of the Earth and the immobility of the Sun is a purely mathematical one, as opposed to a fact-based theory.[39] 'To my opponents', wrote Galileo to Kepler, after having published his *Siderius nuncius*, 'philosophy is a book like the *Aeneid* or the *Odyssey*: truth is not to be found in the world or in nature, but in comparing texts'.[40] A few years later, when Galileo is involved in a debate with Orazio Grassi about the three comets observed in 1618, he defends his friend Mario Guiducci by mocking his opponent, who seems to think that Philosophy is a book like any other, a product of man's imagination like the *Iliad* or *Orlando furioso*. To the reader of that kind of book, truth does not really matter:

> Philosophy is written in that grand book which ever lies before our eyes (I mean the universe) but we cannot understand it if we do not first learn the language and grasp the symbols in which it is written. This book is written in the mathematical language, and the symbols are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures, without whose help it is humanly impossible to comprehend a single word of it and without which one wanders around in vain through a dark labyrinth.[41]

In the *Saggiatore*, Galileo uses, in a highly polemical and rhetorical manner, the traditional metaphor of the 'Book of Nature' to secure a new intellectual space for modern science. 'Philosophy', that is to say physics or science, is not something a lay reader can understand. One needs ingenuity, one must be astute and knowledgeable in order to understand and decipher the work of God using mathematical language. It is thus clear that for Galileo, this mathematical language is the language of God himself.[42] Pascal's opinion is not far removed from this:

> Et quoi ne dites-vous pas vous-même que le ciel et les oiseaux prouvent Dieu? Non. Et votre religion ne le dit-elle pas? Non. Car encore que cela est vrai en un sens et pour quelques âmes à qui Dieu donna cette lumière, néanmoins cela est faux à l'égard de la plupart. (L3)

Nature may well be a book open to all, but only a few are able to understand its true meaning. God, Pascal's God, was unwilling to make the key available to all. The book of Creation is sealed, 'scellé' (L489); God has revealed certain secrets of the Creation 'clairement mais abondamment en figures afin que ceux qui aimaient les choses figurantes s'y arrêtassent et que ceux qui aimaient les figures les y vissent' (L270).[43] According to Pascal, God has thus spoken figuratively, in order to hide his real thoughts from evil-doers. According to Tesauro, the angels, Nature and God himself, when talking to men, express the most abstruse and important secrets in a symbolical and rhetorical way.[44] Tesauro, however, asserts that God also chose to express Himself in this way because such devices amuse Him and will amuse His audience in turn.[45] Tesauro considered God as a poet and subtle orator, who used all kinds of figures and symbols to communicate with both angels and humans.[46] He did so because his wit and subtlety are a superior source of inspiration. His sublime and marvellous work has to be admired and ultimately venerated. Thirdly, God has added some wit to make the bitter truth easier to swallow. And last but not least, God has to avert the obtuse and reckless throng from thinking itself capable of interpreting His Word. Only the most fortunate and astute sages, who are privy to the celestial secrets, can extract the essential mystery from the literal dross.[47]

God is a Poet: Tesauro and Pascal

What kind of human beings are then capable of the most subtle reasoning?[48] Those who are naturally talented: painters, architects, engineers, scientists like the one who invented the telescope have been blessed with ingenuity; further, those who work and read, who think in order to develop their mental abilities; finally, those who are possessed by frenzy, 'furore', and have their mind altered by passion, inspiration or madness. Passion transforms the mind and focuses it. Inspiration, or enthusiasm, characterizes the sacred prophets and great poets like Orpheus, Hesiod and Homer. In fact, a metaphor is essentially nothing but a folly, or kind of madness, as it consists of taking one thing for another... But then Tesauro takes an interesting sidestep: madmen possess incredibly subtle minds, and therefore the most subtle minds, like those of poets and mathematicians, are more inclined to descend into madness.[49] In this way, Tesauro is asserting again that the process of discovery, the *ars inveniendi*, does not pass through the established topical phase. Neither mathematicians nor poets feel the need to consult commonplace books or to compile copious collections of quotations. According to Tesauro, mathematicians and poets do not arrive at the truth via this model of reasoning, for they are capable of grasping the relationship between things thanks to their own *ingenium*. Tesauro admits that the equilibrium is a fragile one: too vivid an imagination can engender phantasmagorical visions, yet it must be 'gagliarda' — strong, vigorous — in order to interpret correctly God's poetical mind.

Here we may perceive the extent of the divergence between Pascal and Tesauro. Pascal hopes to show, 'faire voir' (L199), and paint 'l'abîme nouveau' between the infinitely big and the extreme smallness of Nature, 'l'extrême petitesse de la nature':

> Qui se considérera de la sorte s'effrayera de soi-même et se considérant soutenu dans la masse que la nature lui a donnée entre ces deux abîmes de l'infini et du néant, il tremblera dans la vue de ces merveilles et je crois que sa curiosité se changeant en admiration il sera plus disposé à les contempler en silence qu'à les rechercher avec présomption.

Wonder and admiration engender terror. The spectator will stand in silent admiration before these two entities of infinity and nothingness, neither of which he can truly see. Likewise, he will not admire the richness of the metaphor and the genius of the orator and the poet, but will instead contemplate these wonders in silence. Pascal and Tesauro converge on this point: a superior level of knowledge is to be attained through admiration. However, the very nature and object of this admiration — for Pascal, the signified; for Tesauro, the signifier — differ in accordance with their two viewpoints. Admiration is a source of joy in Tesauro's work, yet the cause of terror and self-knowledge for Pascal. A follower of Tesauro happily admires the ingenuity of the Creator, whereas a good Christian instructed by Pascal becomes aware of his own feeble condition: 'Quand on est instruit on comprend que la nature ayant gravé son image et celle de son auteur dans toutes choses elles tiennent presque toutes de sa double infinité' (L199). The metaphor of the two infinities allows Pascal to emphasize the incompressible distance between man and God, and the impossibility of deciphering divine Creation. The infinitely big and the infinitely small are equally inaccessible to man, even to the learned man, the sage and the poet. Like 'l'infinité d'infinités de propositions' to which geometry can give rise, the infinity of science eliminates the possibility of obtaining definitive knowledge of the world, the universe and creation. Metaphor thus does not allow one to reach the inaccessible, but does allow one to become aware of it. In a passage of 'De l'esprit géométrique', Pascal develops the idea of a general and endless doubt with regard to the possibility of distinguishing between different instruments, 'car enfin qui les aura assurés que ces verres auront changé la grandeur naturelle de ces objets, ou s'ils auront au contraire rétabli la véritable, que la figure de notre œil avait changée et raccourcie comme font les lunettes qui amoindrissent?'[50]

This scepticism, however, does not lead to a watered-down form of fideism: Pascal refuses to come out in favour of either Galileo or his Catholic censors. In the eighteenth *provinciale*, he establishes the limits of faith and the domain of science:

> Ce fut aussi en vain que vous obtîntes contre Galilée ce décret de Rome qui condamnait son opinion touchant le mouvement de la terre. Ce ne sera pas cela qui prouvera qu'elle demeure en repos ; et, si l'on avait des observations constantes qui prouvassent que c'est elle qui tourne, tous les hommes ensemble ne l'empêcheraient pas de tourner, et ne s'empêcheraient pas de tourner aussi avec elle.[51]

The domain of reason and experience does not fall under the 'jurisdiction' of the Church, even if God ultimately does appear as the guardian of truth. But nor is it geometricians who will decipher the book of the world: 'ce qui passe la géométrie nous surpasse.'[52] This approach paves the way for religious thought but, unlike Tesauro, Pascal does not display faith through metaphor. According to Tesauro, the more abstract the terms of the metaphor, the more intense the reflection and the more fertile the thought it engenders. The frenzied dialectic[53] of this rhetorical device allows one to conceive the complexity of the world: the most intelligent thinkers are capable of combining very different terms.[54] Pascal, however, is not convinced of this: 'Ceux qui font des antithèses en forçant les mots sont comme ceux qui font de fausses fenêtres pour la symétrie. Leur règle n'est pas de parler juste mais de faire des figures justes' (L559). Baroque thinking is obsessed with apt figures of speech, not with accuracy, as becomes evident in Bouhours's comment on Gracián and Tesauro: Gracián, says Bouhours, is so 'obscure' that he is perhaps himself unable to understand what he is saying.[55] Similarly, Tesauro seems for Gracián to ignore the essence of metaphor. As far as Bouhours is concerned, it is only possible to recognize those things which are already familiar: 'Ce n'est pas encore assez que la Figure soit noble & agreable ; il faut de plus qu'elle soit connuë, & qu'elle se fasse mesme reconnoistre dés qu'on la voit: car un objet inconnu ne touche pas.' A metaphor is deficient, 'vicieuse', when it evokes unknown and strange plants or creatures, when it is built on ambiguous and vague terms.[56] The major difference between the two philosophers is that Tesauro stresses the range of possibilities a metaphor offers. By contrast, Bouhours insists that there are a number of necessary qualities a metaphor has to fulfil; and Tesauro and Gracián are clearly unable to achieve the clarity one needs to think effectively.[57]

In the *Entretien avec Monsieur de Saci*, Pascal admits to being a critical admirer of the Stoic sage, Epictetus. Although he adopted 'des principes d'une superbe diabolique', Epictetus knows that to become wise, and to find serenity, a man had to see himself as a tiny part of the universe.[58] As the early modern readers of Copernicus and Galileo discovered, this is a universe governed by the Sun. The telescope helped them to discover the vastness and the nature of the cosmos, but also the blemishes or black spots on the wonderful celestial body at its centre. Henceforth, to start reading the book of the world, one had to be familiar with geometry and rhetoric. To reach perfection, one had to study the imperfect.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. See Pierre Hadot, *Qu'est-ce la Philosophie antique*? (Paris: Gallimard, 1995).
2. Michel de Montaigne, *Les Essai*s, ed. by Pierre Villey and Verdun-Louis Saulnier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992), I, 26, 157.
3. Montaigne, I, 26, 158.
4. 'J'ai été nourri aux lettres des mon enfance, et parce qu'on me persuadait que, par leur moyen, on pouvait acquérir une connaissance claire et assurée de tout ce qui est utile à la vie, j'avais un extrême désir de les apprendre.' René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* (Paris: GF, Flammarion, 1966), p. 35.
5. See Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
6. Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, p. 38.
7. Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, p. 39.

8. René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode, La Dioptrique*, p. 99.
9. Emanuele Tesauro, *Il Cannocchiale aristotelico* (Turin: 1670; repr. Zürich: Verlag Dr. Max Gehlen, 1968); See also Yves Hersant, *La Métaphore baroque: D'Aristote à Tesauro; Extraits du Cannocchiale aristotelico* (Paris: Seuil, 2001).
10. See Alfonso Ingegno, 'The New Philosophy of Nature', in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. by Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 264–300.
11. Montaigne, II, 12, 539.
12. See Mercedes Blanco, *Les Rhétoriques de la Pointe: Baltasar Gracián et le Conceptisme en Europe* (Paris: Champion, 1992), pp. 343–99.
13. Tesauro, p. 82.
14. Tesauro, p. 298.
15. Tesauro, p. 266.
16. Tesauro, p. 266.
17. Guillaume Du Vair, *De l'Éloquence française et des Raisons pourquoy elle est demeurée si basse*, pp. 136–37, cited by Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books*, p. 183.
18. Ernesto Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), p. 92.
19. *Œuvres de* Descartes, ed. by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, 11 vols (Paris: Vrin, 1974–86), I, 10, cited by Stephen Gaukroger, *Descartes: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 182.
20. Gaukroger, *Descartes*, p. 182.
21. Tesauro, p. 267.
22. Tesauro, p. 267.
23. See Fernand Hallyn, *Formes métaphoriques dans la poésie lyrique à l'âge baroque en France* (Geneva: Droz, 1975), p. 22.
24. Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1412a.
25. Nicholas Copernicus, *On the Revolutions*, ed. by J. Dobrzycki, trans. by E. Rosen (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. XVI, cited in F. Hallyn, *The Poetic Structure of the World: Copernicus and Kepler*, trans. by Donald M. Leslie (New York: Zone Books, 1990), p. 50.
26. Copernicus, *On the Revolutions*, p. 4, cited by F. Hallyn, *The Poetic Structure*, p. 73.
27. See Alexandre Koyré, *Etudes d'histoire de la pensée scientifique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), p. 67.
28. Copernicus, *On the Revolutions*, p. 22, cited F. Hallyn, *The Poetic Structure*, p. 127.
29. See Robert E. Proctor, 'Emanuele Tesauro: A Theory of Conceit', in *The Italian Issue*, special issue of *Modern Language Notes*, 88.1 (Jan. 1973), 68–94.
30. Descartes, *Les Principes de la Philosophie*, in *Œuvres*, IX, 321. See F. Hallyn, 'Du Cosmos à l'Univers: Les Images du monde', in *Histoire de la France littéraire: Classicismes — XVII*^{e} *— XVIII*^{e} *siècle*, ed. by Jean-Charles Darmon and Michel Delon (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006), p. 167.
31. See Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli: Leibniz et le Baroque* (Paris: Minuit, 1988), p. 172.
32. Tesauro, p. 315. See Donato, 'Tesauro's Poetics: Through the Looking Glass', *Modern Language Notes*, 78.1, (Jan. 1963), 15–30.
33. Pascal, 'Pensées', in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Louis Lafuma (Paris: Seuil, 1963). Further references in the main text will be made to this edition: individual fragments will be preceded by the letter L.
34. Tesauro, p. 301.
35. Tesauro, p. 88.
36. Tesauro, p. 89.
37. Tesauro, p. 89.
38. Galileo Galilei, *Lettre à Christine de Lorraine et autres Écrits coperniciens*, ed. and trans. by Philippe Hamou and Martha Spranzi (Paris: Livre de Poche, 2004), p. 209.
39. Galilei, *Lettre à Christine de Lorraine*, p. 211.
40. 'Putat enim hoc hominum genus, philosophiam esse librum quondam velut Eneida et Odissea;

vera autem non in mundo aut in natura, sed in confrontatione textuum [...] esse querenda': Galileo in a letter to Kepler, 19 August 1610 — quoted by Hans Blumenberg, *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1981), p. 72.

41. Galileo Galilei, *The Assayer*, trans. by Stillman Drake in Galileo Galilei et al., *The Controversy of the Comets of 1618* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), pp. 183–84, *Il Saggiatore*, Opere di Galileo, VI, 232.
42. Blumenberg, *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt*, p. 75.
43. See Francesco Paulo Adorno, *Pascal* (Paris: Perrin, 2010), pp. 97–103.
44. Tesauro, p. 2.
45. Tesauro, p. 17.
46. Tesauro, p. 59.
47. Tesauro, p. 59.
48. Tesauro, pp. 82–83.
49. Tesauro, p. 93.
50. Pascal, 'De l'Esprit géométrique et de l'Art de Persuader', in *Œuvres complètes*, p. 353.
51. Pascal, 'Dix-huitième lettre au révérend P. Annat, Jésuite', in *Œuvres complètes*, p. 467.
52. Pascal, 'De l'Esprit géométrique', p. 349. See also: 'La dernière démarche de la raison est de reconnaître qu'il y a une infinité de choses qui la surpassent. Elle n'est que faible si elle ne va jusqu'à connaître cela. Que si les choses naturelles la surpassent, que dira-(t)-on des surnaturelles?' (L188).
53. Gérard Genette, 'L'Or tombe sous le fer', in *Figures* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), pp. 29–38.
54. Tesauro, p. 82.
55. Dominique Bouhours, *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* (Paris: Sébastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1671), p. 203 and p. 278.
56. Bouhours, p. 279.
57. See the fourth chapter of *Les Entretiens*, 'Le Bel Esprit': 'Ce juste temperament de la vivacité & du bon sens, fait que l'esprit est subtil, & qu'il n'est point évaporé; qu'il brille, mais qu'il ne brille point trop; qu'il conçoit tout promptement, & qu'il juge sainement de tout. Quand on a de cette sorte d'esprit, on pense bien les choses, & on les exprime aussi bien qu'on les a pensées' (Bouhours, p. 194).
58. Pascal, 'Entretien avec M. de Saci', in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. cit., p. 293.

CHAPTER 5

Anecdotes and Affects

Michael Moriarty

Those whose stock-in-trade is early modern intellectual history, and who therefore find themselves dealing largely with abstractions, may cherish the narrative interventions or digressions that can embellish the point at issue — or perhaps drive it ruthlessly home. The hint of aggression in this phrase seems justified by certain early modern instances of anecdotal illustration.

Can anyone who has read Machiavelli's *Il principe* forget the story of Messer Remirro d'Orco?[1] Cesare Borgia had used Remirro as an enforcer, to pacify the province of Romagna. This result achieved, Cesare decided that his henchman was more of a liability than an asset, because his cruelty had made Cesare himself unpopular. One morning, therefore, the people of Cesena got up to the sight of Remirro's body in the piazza — chopped in half, with a bloody knife and a block of wood beside it. The deed is in itself shocking, in part because of its evident spectacular quality. Machiavelli speaks of Cesare as intending to 'purgare gli animi di quelli populi' (p. 52) as if he were staging a tragedy, and the effect responds to his intentions; the people were both satisfied and stupefied ('satisfatti e stupidi') (p. 52). But part of the shock comes also from Machiavelli's tone. Suppose, for instance, the anecdote had been inserted in a diatribe against the wickedness of Cesare Borgia, and suppose also that we already believed him to be wicked. While we should still be revolted by the act, we might be strangely comforted by it, in that it would confirm our existing loathing of the agent — just as in politics opponents of a government take a kind of pleasure in each new revelation of its evil intentions, because, at least, it confirms them in the correctness of their stance; and on this supposition we should feel grateful to the narrator, with whom we appear to have a moral perspective in common. But on the contrary Machiavelli presents the deed not only as worthy of notice, but as worthy to be imitated by others (p. 51).

In so doing he is doubling the shock of the anecdote. Cesare, he argues elsewhere, had *virtú* because he did not scruple to do what he knew to be necessary; Machiavelli, as it were, claims an analogous quality because he does not scruple to point out what he knows to be true, even if he knows it will disturb his readers. The narrative, in recounting the spectacle, reproduces and translates its effect. It thus does more than communicate a theory, that political expediency trumps, ignores, or even flouts moral values; it challenges the reader through the affects it produces, so as to transform shock into awe. It thus threatens to loosen the reader's grip on his or her own moral values, to transform them into an aesthetic response of satisfied stupefaction. Though a reader might respond rather by tightening that grip ('I don't know which is more revolting, what Cesare did, or the way Machiavelli talks about it'), he or she would be aware that this reaction is struggling against an intended effect of the text. Or again, one might respond in that way, while nevertheless feeling defeated by the text, like someone who walks out of an ultra-violent film — are you making a dignified protest against a dehumanizing and repulsive spectacle, or are you simply not tough enough to cope?[2]

In other words, Machiavelli is doing more than illustrating his theory through an anecdote that would enable one more clearly to grasp the concepts involved. He attempts to modify the reader's relationship to the theory through the affective impact of the anecdote. I shall be looking in this article at a certain number of anecdotes from early modern French texts that serve to illustrate a theory, but that also produce a certain affective response, which may or may not chime with the general proposition they are illustrating.[3]

Here is a familiar example, where the examples do seem to match the general proposition. In the chapter 'Que le goust des biens et des maux dépend en bonne partie de l'opinion que nous en avons' (I.14), Montaigne is arguing that we can think our way through the fear of death. And for this purpose he lists a string of examples of 'personnes populaires' behaving with self-assurance in the face of execution.[4] The most obvious sign of their self-assurance is the fact that many of them joke, and these pages of the chapter do indeed read like excerpts from an anthology of gallows humour ('Merry Jests from the Scaffold'). Perhaps the most famous example is that of the man from Picardy who is offered the chance of life if he will marry a certain woman, and who rejects it when he sees she has a limp: 'Attache, Attache, dit il, elle cloche' (p. 52). Now Montaigne does not necessarily expect us to admire these people; indeed he refers to 'ces viles ames de bouffons' (p. 52). But it is hard not to think that he expects the reader to laugh, and therefore to realize through his or her own reaction that death can, after all, be viewed as a bit of a joke; or alternatively that if, being a lady or gentleman, it would be unseemly for one to quip in the face of death, one should find some strategy to enable one to cope at least as well as these common folk.

Now this same interplay between a logic of universality and a logic of distinction can be witnessed, though it functions in a very different way, in La Rochefoucauld's handling of the same theme. The *Maximes* are of course famous for their abstraction and for their air of generality, though some readers have attempted to override this by generating narratives from the maxims: Louis Van Delft cites a rather comic (or embarrassing) example of a novelistic rewriting of maxim 71 ('Il n'y a guère de gens qui ne soient honteux de s'être aimés quand ils ne s'aiment plus').[5] There is, however, one anecdote within the text itself, in the last long reflection on the fear of death.[6] It is cited to bear out the point that reason cannot assist us in this predicament:

> Tout ce qu'elle peut faire pour nous est de nous conseiller d'en détourner les yeux pour les arrêter sur d'autres objets. Caton et Brutus en choisirent d'illustres. Un laquais se contenta, il y a quelque temps, de danser sur l'échafaud où il allait être roué. (*Maximes*, 504; *RSM*, p. 197)

La Rochefoucauld was clearly struck by this incident of the lackey's dancing on the scaffold, for he refers to it in a letter to Mme de Sablé of 17 August 1662:

> [M. Esprit] me parle aussi d'un laquais qui a dansé les tricotets sur l'échafaud où il allait être roué: il me semble que voilà jusqu'où le philosophie d'un laquais méritait d'aller. Je crois que toute gaieté en cet état vous est bien suspecte. (letter 8 [5 in *MMOD*], *RSM*, p. 590)[7]

The lackey has danced his way into rather exclusive company. He is mentioned along with Brutus and Cato, and the only other individuals mentioned in the collection are Augustus and Mark Antony (maxim 7), Condé and Turenne (198), and the Athenian madman who believed that he owned all the vessels in Piraeus (92). So it is fair to say, as Truchet does, that La Rochefoucauld was 'beaucoup frappé' by this incident (*MMOD*, p. 227 n. 2), which he did not even witness himself, since it was reported to him by Esprit (who may or may not have witnessed it). His comment on it in the letter to Mme de Sablé, however, expresses only suspicion and socially-grounded contempt. In the published version, the narrative avoids even this admixture of subjectivity (compare 'il me semble' in the letter). It is remarkably even in tone, drained of any possible affect. This is not surprising, given the author: La Rochefoucauld himself tells us 'je suis peu sensible à la pitié, et je voudrais ne l'y être pas du tout'; it is a passion 'qui ne sert qu'à affaiblir le cœur et qu'on doit laisser au peuple' ('Portrait de M. R. D. fait par lui-même' (*RSM*, pp. 551–56 (p. 554)). But my interest is rather in the functioning of affect, or its absence, within the text. The apparent affectlessness accords well with the flattening it is carrying out on the conceptual level. The prospect of death is terrible, and all any of us can do in the fact of it is to think of something else. The heroic Cato and Brutus are apparently devalued by being compared to a servant and convicted criminal: 'Bien que les motifs soient différents, ils produisent les mêmes effets' (504, *RSM*, p. 196). The difference between the two sets of motives is annulled by their shared effect, namely, the occupation of the mind with thoughts other than the awareness of imminent death. But the text resists its own levelling tendencies. This is apparent even in the sentence just quoted, which is curiously phrased, since what La Rochefoucauld seems to be exhibiting is a motive common to both parties (the desire to avoid thinking about death), which produces different effects (energetic physical activity, on the one hand, intense mental effort on the other). However, he implicitly rejects this way of envisaging the matter, insisting in his concluding sentences on the difference between the mental processes of the great men and those of the servant. The great men's mental processes ('Caton et Brutus en choisirent d'illustres' [*sc.* 'objets']) are related to their situation: they manage not to think about death by thinking about things supposedly greater than death, such as immortality and virtue.[8] The common people ('les gens du commun' (*RSM*, p. 197)) are simply too stupid to take in their situation, and can thus occupy themselves with something as apparently inappropriate as a dance. None the less, this is not a purely mechanical reaction: as with the great men, there is a deliberate diversion of attention; their very intellectual limitation 'leur laisse la liberté de penser à autre chose' (*RSM*, p. 197). A similar refusal to allow social distinctions to be effaced by moral resemblances appears in maxim 214, where the courage of common soldiers is stated to be merely a condition of their livelihood, whereas 213 highlights a host of different motives behind courageous behaviour: psychological complexity, even of a morally dubious kind, is a privilege of the officer.

And yet the tendency of maxim 504, prior to the anecdote, was towards universal truths about the human condition. Here as elsewhere, the apparently universal purport of the *Maximes* is being circumscribed by an ideological logic of distinction. The solitary lackey occupies the same place in the discourse as the female sex in general: that of the marginal instance that confines an apparently human universality to a class- and gender-specific 'universality' that merely reinforces and naturalizes class and gender hierarchies. The maxim's apparent affectlessness is in fact a skilful moderation and modulation of affect: it must mobilize contempt for the servant (both as a servant and on account of his behaviour, which would appear grossly undignified to a person of rank, all the more so because of the favourable impression it might make on the populace), enough contempt for some of it to reflect back on the heroic figures of Cato and Brutus, whose powers of reason were not sufficient to enable them to cope with death in an altogether different manner: they too needed to distract themselves from what was about to happen to them; and yet not so much as to diminish the reader's sense of entitlement to that contempt — since if Brutus and Cato were to appear as no better than a lackey, how should we hope to sustain the belief in our own superiority? (As for pity, or admiration, directed towards the servant, if one were stung by the text into feeling it, as one might be stung by Machiavelli's text into indignation, this would be merely a sign of one's own effeminate or plebeian mindset, of a spiritual kinship with the lackey and with the mob of spectators.)

To state the obvious, then, both Machiavelli and La Rochefoucauld aim to challenge or to inhibit responses of indignation or pity or sympathy. The dangers of such responses are brought out in another account of an execution, by Malebranche. He reports the case of a young man born mad and deformed, lodged in the hospital for the incurables; and this is no urban legend: 'plusieurs personnes l'ont vu' and he was visited even by the queen mother, Anne of Austria, who not only saw but touched his body. The cause of the young man's condition is explained along psycho-physical lines. His mother, when pregnant, went to see a criminal broken on the wheel, and her imagination was affected by the blows inflicted on 'ce misérable'. But although she was not permanently affected by the sight, the child in her womb was. His body was broken in the very places the executed man's had been.[9]

The text seeks to distance the reader somewhat from mirroring the woman's reaction, from feeling compassion for her and indeed for the original victim: the man executed is 'ce misérable' but also 'le criminel'. Moreover, Malebranche stresses the gendered nature of her response: the execution is indeed referred to as 'une action si terrible' but also as 'si capable d'effrayer une femme' (p. 178). In the case of Machiavelli and La Rochefoucauld, possibly Montaigne as well, a reaction of compassion or shock directed at the victim of a supposedly deserved violent death would be unworthy of the manly reader, incapable of learning the political or philosophical lesson of the text. Here compassion is not quite out of place, but it must not obscure the lesson that monstrous births are due to the ardent desires or violent passions of the mother. But of course the reader's compassion (and, for a present-day reader, perhaps revulsion from the misogynistic implications) might well come into play, quite independently of any intellectual response to the theory Malebranche is seeking to explicate, which concerns, in the most general terms, the interaction between bodily and mental processes.[10]

The theory itself, of course, is ultimately derived from Descartes. He himself applies it in a letter of 6 June 1647 to Chanut, the French ambassador to Sweden. We are a long way from public executions here: Chanut has asked about the causes that incline us to love one person rather than another. The question is more reminiscent of salon discussions than of stove-heated rooms, but Descartes rises to the challenge. At least, he half-rises to it.[11]

One would not expect Descartes to use the language of occult properties, the language of 'sympathies' we find in a play published in the same year, Corneille's *Rodogune*, where the heroine mobilizes it to explain why she loves one twin and not the other.[12] His solution at any rate is only partial, for in one of the most frustrating sentences in the whole of his *œuvre* he declines to expatiate on the causes in the mind for such attachments, since the explanation would presupposes 'tant de choses touchant la nature de nos ames, que ie n'oserois entreprendre de les deduire dans vne lettre'.[13] But there is a physical explanation in terms of the disposition of the parts of the brain. The objects that affect our senses move, by means of the nerves, certain parts of our brain, and cause creases ('plis') which disappear when the object ceases to act. But their residual effect is to dispose the brain to be 'creased' afterwards in the same way by an object resembling the original one. And instead of inventing a convenient example Descartes resorts to his own experience:

> Lors que i'estois enfant, i'aimois une fille de mon âge, qui estoit vn peu louche; au moyen de quoy l'impression qui se faisoit par la veuë en mon cerueau, quand ie regardois ses yeux égarez, se ioignoit tellement à celle qui s'y faisoit aussi pour émouuoir en moy la passion de l'amour, que long-temps après, en voyant des personnes louches, ie me sentois plus enclin à les aimer qu'à en aimer d'autres, pour cela seul qu'elles auoient ce défaut; & ie ne sçauois pas neantmoins que ce fust pour cela. (AT v, 57)

Subsequent reflection has not only revealed the cause of this preference but led him to recognize it as a fault, since when he has been no more troubled with it. So the general conclusion, which is indeed remarkably perceptive, is that when we are inclined to love someone without knowing why, this is probably on account of some similarity with a previous object of love. The wise person will therefore refrain from ceding wholly to such a passion until he has well considered the true merits of its object, in case his attachment, like this one, is to an imperfection rather than a perfection. So the anecdote has a thoroughly useful moral, though of course a Freudian would point out that Descartes is unusual in being able to liberate himself from a fetish by conscious effort. Moreover, it exemplifies an important element of Descartes's later writings, the attempt to work out the mechanical processes that constitute the physical aspect of the passions of the soul. And yet — is it heartlessness or on the other hand over-sensitivity to admit that one also finds something both comic and touching in the story of Descartes and his little girlfriend, and in the idea of his later attachments to a series of similarly affected women? Perhaps if there is a comic element here it is in the idea of repetition, and in the spectacle (voyeuristic, maybe) of a desire one does not share.

My next example is more distressing than comic, and it involves going back to Malebranche. First, it is necessary to say something of how he develops Descartes's model of interaction in his own theory of the imagination, which is the faculty operative here, as it was in the case of the mother of the crippled young man. Like sensation, imagination, as a psycho-physical process, involves changes in the fibres of the 'principal part' of the brain, linked, in virtue of occasional causality, to a perception in the soul.[14] In sensation, objects agitate the external fibres or filaments of our sense-organs, and the nerves transmit the agitation to the brain, thus producing, in virtue of occasional causality, a perception on the part of the soul. In imagination the physical agent of these changes in the brain is the 'animal spirits', the most refined part of the blood, so refined as to be more in the nature of wind or flame.[15] I wish to imagine, say a triangle, and the animal spirits move so as to stimulate the internal filaments of the sense-organs in such a way that I 'see' a triangle. But the movement of the animal spirits can take place independently of the will. Moreover, just as objects perceived by the senses can leave traces on the brain, so can the movement of the animal spirits; and again, the correspondence between thoughts in the soul and traces in the brain is matched by another correspondence, between emotions of the soul and movements of the animal spirits.

Now, in virtue of its link to the animal spirits, the imagination is an eminently social or interpersonal faculty. For sociability depends on two propensities: to imitate others and to feel compassion for others, and these operate through the movement of the animal spirits and thus the imagination. The imagination destroys the possibility of existing as the hermetically sealed 'Cartesian' ego of the stereotype. And Malebranche's strongest example of this link between persons is of that between the mother and the child in the womb. The mother's impulse towards imitation or compassion is transmitted to the child, in virtue of their physical connection. Hence, in the anecdote we have already looked at, the mother's shock at the execution was reproduced in the child, and the more delicate fibres of his brain could not recover from the violent surge of animal spirits. The second example of a monstrous birth is that of a child born disfigured, so much so that it is unable to live, as a result of its mother's gazing too fervently on a picture of St Pius V during pregnancy. Her imitation of the saint's posture was carried over into the baby's body.

> Il avait le visage d'un vieillard, autant qu'en est capable un enfant qui n'a point de barbe. Ses bras étaient croisés sur sa poitrine, ses yeux tournés vers le ciel, et il avait très peu de front, parce que l'image de ce saint étant élevée vers la voûte de l'église en regardant le ciel, n'avait aussi presque point de front. Il avait une espèce de mitre renversée sur ses épaules, avec plusieurs marques rondes aux endroits où les mitres sont couvertes de pierreries. (II-1.vii.3, p. 179)

We could of course receive this as simply a telling illustration of the theory, albeit an 'exemple assez particulier' (p. 179). Malebranche claims to have seen the baby's body himself, and so could the whole of Paris, since the body was preserved in spirits for some considerable time. Yet, again, I have to confess to something like embarrassment in the encounter with this story. Is there not in fact something comic in the idea of a newborn child resembling an aged pontiff, in the very excess of the correspondence between the body and the portrait, the very jewels of the Pope's mitre, as portrayed in the picture, reproducing themselves on the child's shoulders, and in the idea of a great thinker laboriously offering an explanation we know not to be true? I do not think this is simply an anachronistic response, because one can easily imagine a *libertin* reader of the late seventeenth century (La Mothe Le Vayer, say, had he lived long enough to read *De la recherche de la vérité*) ironizing about the passage in very much this fashion. And yet here too the very mechanism of compassion analysed by Malebranche himself also comes into play to inhibit this unfeeling, nay malicious mirth. What must the mother have felt, seeing her newborn child like this, and seeing it die soon after? What must she have felt, if she believed her own devotional fervour was the cause of it? What must she have felt about her child being exposed as a monstrosity for the learned and the merely curious to pore over?

My last example is perhaps less fraught, yet also unsettling. In his treatise *De la connoissance de soi-même* (1694–98) the Benedictine author François Lamy paints a portrait of human nature that is strongly influenced by both Descartes and Malebranche. Like Malebranche he is troubled by our propensity to imitation, since, when all is said and done, it is so often the bad examples we imitate. And he illustrates this by the story (which is so detailed it must be based on personal experience or on that of a reliable witness) of 'un homme d'esprit et de vertu, de profession et de genie à estre fort esloigné de chanter des airs profanes'.[16] The last word suggests that we are dealing with an ecclesiastic, in which case the use of the periphrastic reference to his profession is striking. One day this man takes a trip on a water-coach, where the boatmen are singing a new song. He pays no attention and converses of other things. But the song (never heard by him before) must have made an impression on him 'imperceptiblement', to judge by what happens later. That evening he faints with hunger: he has not eaten all day. Perhaps he started too early to breakfast, perhaps he is fasting — in which case his piety is rather cruelly rewarded. For he regains consciousness only partially at first, and starts to sing the song he has heard the boatmen sing, until he comes fully to himself. Theoretically, the anecdote serves to illustrate how the Cartesian psycho-physical model can explain imitation, even of an involuntary kind. Although the man was not listening to the song, it must have made an impression on his brain, exciting the animal spirits into motion. That motion was checked while the man was conscious and attentive to his conversation. When he fainted his reason was eclipsed (and hence, we can suggest, his will, which had been directing his attention, ceased to do so). The animal spirits thus yielded wholly to the motion, and surged into the vocal organs, producing the same motions as had been produced by the boatmen in their own vocal organs, with the result that he sang their song (pp. 204–05). There is a disturbing erasure of boundaries here. The man, we remember, was 'un homme d'esprit et de vertu, de profession et de genie à estre fort esloigné de chanter des airs profanes'. The song, then, is not such as we should expect a man of intelligence and virtue to sing: it is vulgar, in every possible sense; moreover, 'profanes' sets it in opposition to the sacred. And if I am right in seeing the unspecific reference to the man's profession as indicating that he is in fact is an ecclesiastic, then the periphrasis is understandable, as an attempt to soften the picture, disagreeable to all pious sensibilities, of a man of the cloth singing an unsuitable song. And yet again there is something uncomfortable in the anecdote, which goes beyond its very dramatic illustration of a philosophical theory. What is described must have been cruelly embarrassing to the poor man when he fully came to himself, if he then realized that he had been treating both the crew and his fellow passengers to an involuntary performance they would probably not soon forget. A compassionate focus on his embarrassment would be the best defence against the temptation, in oneself, or in other people to laugh at his mishap. Is it heartless or vulgar even to mention that temptation? From an academic point of view, is it pure subjective impressionism?

I think not, or not entirely. Let me recapitulate. Machiavelli, Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld all seek to disturb or inhibit obvious responses, of horror or compassion, in an attempt to reorder the reader's habitual sense of values. With Descartes, Malebranche, and Lamy the situation is different. All of them are dealing with strange phenomena, the kind that could arouse 'admiration', in the Cartesian sense, that is, our response 'lors que la premiere rencontre de quelque objet nous surprent, & que nous le jugeons estre nouveau, ou fort different de ce que nous connoissions auparavant' (*Les Passions de l'âme*, §53, AT XI, 373). The writer then enables us to master that admiration by demonstrating the power of the theory to explain what first appeared strange and disturbing. In the case of Malebranche and Lamy, there is a further intention, I believe: to alarm us with a sense of our vulnerability to purely physical processes, and thus (and here there is a resemblance with the first three writers) to encourage a change in our everyday attitude to our everyday selves. But I think the Cartesian anecdotes may exert unintended effects, or affects. In pointing to the comic overtones of some of these anecdotes, I hope I have done more than involuntarily display a warped sense of humour. First, laughter, if of a nervous kind, is a possible response to the perceived intention to alarm. Second, it may be that the theory itself has a certain comic potential (this has nothing to do with whether it is true or not). Although it serves to illustrate how an action of the mind, and specifically the will, can produce intended changes in the body, it displays its power also, perhaps, in the analysis of involuntary actions, reactions, and responses, along mechanical lines. It exhibits in fact 'du mécanique plaqué sur du vivant', to cite Bergson's analysis of the comic;[17] and hence, I think, the comic dimension I have hinted at is not simply an arbitrary projection. But there is perhaps also a Bakhtinian aspect to the response. For the theory illustrates, again and again, how the higher faculties of reason and will can be overpowered or suspended by the base mechanisms of the body. And yet there is something pitiable, also, in the spectacle of human beings brought low, trapped, and crippled by these determinations. All of the anecdotes we have looked at here, not only the Cartesian ones, involve bodies tortured, dismembered, disfigured, or out of control. If compassion is a proper response to some of these anecdotes of mechanistic psychology, that thought might lead us to think further of the status of compassion in early modern thought, and in particular of the deliberate inhibition of compassion in an early modern intellectual strand quite different from Cartesianism: the demystifying rationalism of a Machiavelli or a La Rochefoucauld.

Notes to Chapter 5

1. *Il principe*, ch. 7, in Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe: Scritti politici*, ed. by Luigi Fiorentino (Milan: Nursia, 1969), p. 52.
2. The kind of effect this anecdote, narrated in this tone, produces is in fact rather similar to that produced by filmic instances of unexpected violence, such as one finds in Coppola's *The Godfather* trilogy, or the work of Quentin Tarantino.
3. I have discussed some of these elsewhere, without highlighting the question of reader response.
4. Montaigne, *Les Essais*, ed. by Pierre Villey and V.-L. Saulnier, 3 vols paginated as one (Paris: Quadrige/Presses Universitaires de France, 1992 [1st publ. 1924]), pp. 51–53.
5. J. de Lacretelle, 'La Rochefoucauld', in *Tableau de la littérature française*, II, *De Corneille à Chénier* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962 [1st publ. 1939]), pp. 32–33, cited by Louis Van Delft, *Le Moraliste classique: Essai de définition et de typologie* (Geneva: Droz, 1982), pp. 101–02. On the other hand, it is not implausible to see ME 48 [49], 'Qu'une femme est à plaindre quand elle a tout ensemble de l'amour et de la vertu!' as an allusion to *La Princesse de Clèves*, though it has also been linked with Madame de Villedieu's *Mémoires de la vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* (La Rochefoucauld, *Réflexions ou Sentences et maximes morales et Réflexions diverses*, ed. by Laurence Plazenet (Paris: Champion, 2005) (hereafter *RSM*), p. 235).
6. There is a discussion of this maxim in Moriarty, *Disguised Vices: Theories of Virtue in Early Modern French Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 323–24.
7. The connection between the maxim and the letter is pointed out by Truchet, in his note on the maxim (*Maximes*, *Mémoires, Œuvres diverses* [*Maximes, Réflexions diverses*, ed. by Jacques Truchet, rev. Marc Escola; *Portraits, Mémoires*, Grands Écrivains de la France edition, rev. Alain Brunn], La Pochothèque: Le Livre de Poche/Classiques Garnier (Paris: Garnier, 2001) (hereafter *MMOD*), p. 227 n. 2. As Marc Escola observes (*MMOD*, p. 608 n. 1), La Rochefoucauld referred to the incident yet again, in a letter to Robert Arnauld d'Andilly of 1663 (in La Rochefoucauld, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by L. Martin-Chauffier, rev. by Jean Marchand, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 619, where the addressee is identified, apparently wrongly, as the duc de Liancourt). According to the *Petit Robert*, the 'tricotets' is a 'danse [...] gaie et rapide'. The word appears in the version of the maxim in the first edition (I [317]), but is cut thereafter (see *RSM*, pp. 901–04).
8. According to Plutarch, Cato spent his last night reading 'Plato's dialogue concerning the soul' (presumably the *Phaedo*) ('Cato the Younger', in *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. by John Dryden, ed. and rev. by Arthur Hugh Clough, 2 vols, The Modern Library (New York: Random House, 2001), II, 314–15). Brutus, before his suicide, dwelt on his satisfaction in the thought of his matchless reputation for virtue and his moral superiority to the victors ('Marcus Brutus', *Lives*, II, 606).
9. Malebranche, *De la recherche de la vérité*, II-1.vii.3, in *Œuvres*, ed. by Geneviève Rodis-Lewis and Germain Malbreil, 2 vols, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1979–92), I, 178. Malebranche's accounts and analyses of monstrous births are discussed in Moriarty, *Early Modern French Thought: The Age of Suspicion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 179, 203–08.
10. 'Interaction' is a problematic term here because Malebranche does not think that bodies can properly speaking act at all. But he has not explained his occasionalist theory, according to which God is the only true cause, at this stage of *De la recherche de la vérité*, where he uses the ordinary language of causation. See below, n. 14.
11. The letter to Chanut is discussed in Moriarty, *Early Modern French Thought*, pp. 80–81.
12. 'Il est des nœuds secrets, il est des sympathies, | Dont par le doux rapport les âmes assorties | S'attachent l'une à l'autre et se laissent piquer | Par ces je ne sais quoi, qu'on ne peut expliquer' (*Rodogune*, I.v.359–62, in Pierre Corneille, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Georges Couton, 3 vols, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1980–87), II, 217).

13. Descartes, *Œuvres de Descartes*, ed. by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, 12 vols (Paris: Léopold Cerf, 1897–1910; repr. Paris: Vrin, 1996) (hereafter AT), v, 56.
14. Malebranche denies that finite entities can be causes in the everyday sense: that is, they have no intrinsic power to bring about any change in themselves or any other finite entity. The movement of the locomotive does not of itself set the carriages in motion. The only agent here is God, who wills both the locomotive and the carriages to move: not by a discrete intervention, prodding them into motion, but in virtue of the laws of the communication of movement he has established. The locomotive's movement, however, can be said to be the 'occasional' cause of that of the carriages, in that it is the occasion for the laws of motion to take effect. Likewise, God has established laws of body–soul union, whereby processes in the brain are succeeded by processes in the soul, and vice versa, without, strictly speaking, any interaction taking place. See *De la recherche de la vérité*, VI.II.3, p. 647.
15. Descartes, *L'Homme*, in AT XI, 119–215 (pp. 128–33).
16. François Lamy, OSB, *De la connoissance de soi-mesme*, 1st edn, 5 vols in 4, first 2 vols paginated as one (Paris: André Pralard, 1694–98), III, 204.
17. Henri Bergson, *Le Rire: Essai sur la signification du comique*, 11th edn (Paris: Quadrige/Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), pp. 29, 38.

CHAPTER 6

❖

Novel Proofs: Villedieu's *Les Désordres de l'amour*

Katherine Ibbett

What does it mean to believe in a novel? What kind of knowledge is proffered by fictional genres, and on what authority? We know that readers of early novels in France were greatly exercised by such questions: debates about *vraisemblance* tell us that seventeenth-century readers reflected on the kind of knowledge available through fiction, and asked themselves if they would assent to a fictional world's authority to extend such knowledge. Early novels were an experimental wager between writer and reader, with each side attempting to establish what might be accomplished (and what might be enjoyed) in the new form: the swirl of debate around the publication of Lafayette's *La Princesse de Clèves* (1678) is only the most famous indicator of such careful but determined investigations. In this essay I will explore a very particular and early case of this experimental method, Madame de Villedieu's 1675 historical novella *Les Désordres de l'amour*, a text that in its attempts to experiment with different forms of writing marks something of both the nervousness and the scope of a new genre.[1]

Villedieu's text, the culmination of a successful if scandalous writing career, describes the early years of the religious wars. It seems to have served as a model for *La Princesse de Clèves*, published three years later; like that greater success, it features a prominent avowal made by a wife to her husband. In recent years Villedieu has come into critical favour in part because of her bold generic flexibility: over the course of a successful career she produced a huge corpus, including plays, fake memoirs, and epistolary novels, among other genres. Recent feminist scholarship has established that the historical novella as a genre rewrote history by reworking the material of historical chronicles to point to the intimate stories at the heart of early modern power.[2] In keeping with this tradition, *Les Désordres de l'amour* has largely and rightly been read as an experiment at the intersection of two forms of writing: the historical chronicle of writers such as Mézeray, on which it draws heavily, and the shorter fictional form of the *nouvelle*, moving in fits and starts towards something resembling what we now call a novel.[3] Indeed, if we take this text as the model for *La Princesse de Clèves* and think of that text as the beginning of still another form of writing, the *novel* rather than the *novella*, then *Les Désordres de l'Amour* represents the moment at which a particular avenue of generic exploration branches off in new directions.[4]

However we today decide on the generic categories, we know from no less an authority than Pierre Bayle, who rails against her in his dictionary, that in the seventeenth century Villedieu was thought to be responsible for the whole genre of the historical novel. Bayle claims that Villedieu ushered in 'une licence, dont on abuse tous les jours de plus en plus; c'est celle de prêter ses inventions, et ses intrigues galantes, aux plus grands hommes des derniers siècles, et de les mêler avec des faits qui ont quelque fondement dans l'Histoire.'[5] Bayle's definition is not meant generously, but it is a wonderful description of Villedieu's technique. In this essay I set out some of the ways that she sought to defend and define the 'licence' she grants herself in grappling with history, and suggest that her methodology tells us much about what fictional freedom and its limits might look like in the 1670s.

Fictional freedom has perhaps too lofty a ring, for Villedieu finds her way to writerly authority not through large pronouncements but through a series of gestures and generic appropriations. The first appropriation is that of the worldly genre of the maxim. Villedieu's text is divided into four parts, and the final two sections make one story together, often anthologized separately as the 'Histoire de Givry'. Distributed liberally throughout the various sections of the text are a series of maxims in verse, numbered in a sequence which continues across the sectional dividers, and set apart from the body of the text. Here is an example of an early instance of this:

> MAXIME II
>
> Mais est-il un bonheur effectif et durable,
> Dans ce qui roule sur l'Amour?
> Tout s'y trouve sujet aux perils d'un retour;
> Son espoir le plus juste et le plus vraisemblable,
> Nait, se détruit, et renait dans un jour.
> Ses douceurs passent comme un songe,
> Ses promesses ne sont qu'un seduisant mensonge;
> Et toutesfois, ô triste aveuglement!
> Ce que nous connoissons de plus grand sur la terre,
> Ce qui fait à nos yeux son plus bel ornement,
> Les loiz, l'honneur, la paix, la guerre,
> Tout se trouve sujet à son enchantement. (43)

These maxims provide the occasion to display a very worldly form of knowledge, a form of knowledge that could often, as here, be summarized by saying that we know only that everything can be eroded by love, even knowledge itself. All that we know is subject to the enchantment of love, which surpasses and potentially destroys that which is knowable. Thus the maxim offers a reflection on the limits of our knowledge; the worldly 'nous' of its voice acknowledges that it too might be subject to the destructive power of love. Furthermore, the maxim seems to offer a particular reflection on the status of fiction by drawing on a number of terms key to literary argument in the late seventeenth century: that which is 'le plus vraisemblable' can be destroyed by 'un seduisant mensonge'. If we are to know anything in this literary game, the maxim suggests, we must abandon the terms of plausibility bandied around by generations of seventeenth-century critics and embrace instead other forms of reflection: the lie or enchantment. The maxim's peculiar placement both within and outside the movement of the text suggests something of the impossibility of ever establishing a coherent discourse on the complications of such matters. This is exacerbated in the third section, in which the maxims are woven into the narrative itself: Givry, who has lost the letters of his lover Mme de Maugiron, finds them again only to discover that maxims have been added to each letter by another woman, so that Givry eventually comes to read and understand his lover in a new and somewhat disagreeable way.[6]

This piquant deployment of the genre of the maxim has often been the focus of scholarly work on *Les Désordres de l'amour*.[7] For scholars trained to regard *La Princesse de Clèves* as the key fiction of the period, Villedieu's maxims allow for another way of reading the relation between *doxa* and social practice in the novel. And as Faith Beasley has shown, the maxims also point to Villedieu's concern to establish her authority in *mondain* circles: 'Villedieu was nourished, both literally and figuratively, by the salon milieu' (*Salons*, p. 148), Beasley argues, and the maxims '[establish] a dialogue with the worldly public' (p. 156).

Yet *Les Désordres de l'amour* also offers another discourse of authority that has gone largely unremarked in critical literature.[8] Villedieu organizes *Les Désordres* as a series of theorems, positing the new genre of the *nouvelle historique* as a form of demonstrative proof. This curious structure is an anomaly in the development of the novel in France. It represents a discourse far removed from the worldly maxim, as we can hear in Arnauld and Nicole's reproving observation in 1662's *La logique ou l'art de penser* that men 'laissent entrer dans leur ame toutes sortes de discours et de maximes, ils aiment mieux les supposer pour veritables que de les examiner.'[9] Here, in contrast, the maxim collides against a language that recalls the far less worldly examinations of Port-Royal. This language of proof is new to the world of prose fiction. Villedieu uses it with insistence in this text, and yet it seems to disappear from prose fiction thereafter; it is not part of the assortment of styles and scenarios that Lafayette takes up. What is at stake in this determination to make the *nouvelle* a record of proof, and why might Villedieu in particular have been drawn to do so?

The advance of such proofs is central to the structure of the text. *Les Désordres de l'amour* is divided into four parts containing three stories, and each story is proposed in the form of a theorem: 'Que l'amour est le ressort de toutes les autres passions de l'âme', 'Qu'on ne peut donner si peu de puissance à l'amour qu'il n'en abuse', 'Qu'il n'y a point de desespoir, où l'amour ne soit capable de jetter un homme bien amoureux'. Each theorem is then illustrated in somewhat meandering and complicated fashion in the body of the text and finally brought to a resolution at the conclusion. It is at this final point of each story that the narrator draws upon the language of proof, claiming to have proven her proposition and subsequently launching the next proposition that lays the ground for the following story.

The language of proof makes its first appearance at the end of the introductory story. We find the Duc de Guise in a shaky political position: out of favour with the King of Navarre, we are told, he begins to listen to the suggestions made to him by the Ligue, thus beginning the ensuing 'guerre intestine'. Villedieu takes care in these paragraphs gleaned from Mézeray to set out the awkwardness of narrating the start of such complicated histories, but notes that nevertheless 'il demeure pour constant qu'elle [la guerre] prit naissance dès l'année 1577, et il ne l'est pas moins, comme les Mémoires sur lesquels je fais ce commentaire en font foi, qu'elle eut sa source dans les intrigues d'amour que je viens d'écrire' (p. 65).[10] This narration, with its language of pinpoint precision ('pour constant', 'source', and so on), makes the *nouvelle* a vehicle of historical certainty that is able to identify and demonstrate a clear causality; the narrator veers between an impersonal chronical style ('il demeure pour constant') that suggests both a shared code and an insistence on personal narration. Villedieu goes on to tell us that it is through love that the friendship necessary in order to stabilize France falls apart: 'Par cette fatale passion, le Roi de Navarre et le Duc de Guise se diviserent...' and then makes a first-person narratorial intervention: 'tout cela, dis-je, a sa principale cause dans l'amour.' How does the narrator know this to be true, and how is she so determined to insist on this particular causality? Well, says the narrator, 'Il n'est que trop suffisamment prouvé par les diverses intrigues qui composent cet exemple, que l'amour est le ressort de toutes les passions de l'âme.' This language recalls and repeats the terms of the title of this first story, 'Que l'amour est le ressort de toutes les passions de l'âme'. Villedieu's insistent phrasing of her proofs is rather circular. Though 'trop suffisamment' is a syntactic trope of the period, it is hard not to be anachronistically amused by her insistence here: this is not just a *preuve suffisante*, it is always and insistently *more* than that. The fixed expression 'a proof' proves of course exactly nothing; it allows the speaker to confirm a choice without demonstrating it merely by virtue of the seeming transparency of the term.[11]

That love is 'le ressort de toutes les passions de l'âme' also points to Villedieu's concern to establish her story within the terms of philosophical debate. The *ressort* or spring is a term with a particular philosophical inflection in this period: it is the piece in a machine from which all movements stem, but it is also the thing that allows for a certain illusion. Think of Descartes's eerie observation in the second Meditation: writing of how he can be 'presque trompé par les termes du langage ordinaire', Descartes observes that we say we see men in the street, 'et cependant que vois-je de cette fenêtre, sinon des chapeaux et des manteaux, qui peuvent couvrir des spectres ou des hommes feints qui ne se remuent que par ressorts? Mais je juge que ce sont de vrais hommes.'[12] Descartes's pretend men, moved along by *ressorts*, could even stand as a description of the project of the various jumbled forms of what we today call the French novel of the 1670s, forms which ask us to believe in textual specters and take them to be, if not *vrai*, at least *vraisemblable*.[13] Villedieu's sentence even manages to pack in two versions of Descartes: not just his reflection on *ressort* in the *Méditations* in their French version of 1641, but also his *Passions de l'âme* of 1649. This is a densely crafted sentence determined to prove its narrator's philosophical credentials, and allowing the narrator to set up each subsequent section of the story as an experiment. Then, having shown that love is the *ressort*, the narrator makes an announcement that allows the move to the second story in the sequence:

> Je vais tâcher à prouver de même, que si [l'amour] est funeste dans ses excez, il n'est pas moins à redouter dans ses commencemens; l'histoire du Maréchal

> de Bellegarde et de la Marquise de Termes s'offre à propos à ma mémoire pour fournir cette seconde preuve. (66)

So much for the mechanics of a narratorial proof. I want to turn now to consider the various registers of this language of proof in 1675, and to ask what the *nouvelle* — or the novelist — might gain by taking them on. What kind of status is claimed for fiction when it proceeds according to the language of proposition and proof?

Earlier uses of the term 'preuve' in prose fiction tend to draw on the domain of what is certainly a highly codified science in its own right: the worldly ethos and practice of mid-century *galanterie.* In *galant* discourse a 'preuve' is a sign of a particular affection, and as such is a term widely bandied about in the period. The letters of Vincent Voiture, for example, often mention a particular action as 'preuve de mon affection': in a letter to the *marquise* de Sablé, he writes:

> Car j'esperois en vous escrivant le premier et en m'embarquant de ma franche volonté dans ce commerce, vous donner une preuve de mon affection aussi asseurée que celle que j'ai receüe de vous.[14]

That same discourse of *galanterie* is centrally important to Villedieu in the novel, and many of the characters stand or fall on their ability to properly manipulate it. Someone who would do less well in Villedieu's world is Arnolphe of Molière's 1662 *Ecole des femmes*, who when railing at Agnès to persuade her of his amorous intentions loses the proper dignity owing to *galant* courtship by asking her 'Quelle preuve veux-tu que je t'en donne, ingrate?'[15] This courtly language of 'preuve', which Arnolphe does not quite master, seems to suggest that proof is necessary to the negotiations of opposite-sex friendship, like the brandishing of a passport as one crosses a frontier, and that the referencing of such a proof forms part of the highly elaborate codifications and rituals of friendship found in the mid-seventeenth century.[16]

Of course the term crops up in other domains, too, and if *galanterie* mapped proof with reference to the concerns of sociability, even someone lauded for his fostering of *galant* friendship was able to deploy the term in a very different and certainly more painful context: thus in his trial Nicolas Fouquet, presumably familiar with more playful proofs from his days at Vaux, called the court to recognize that 'il faut voir si cet argument fait une preuve Claire, demonstrative, et sans replique, telle qu'il doit faire, pour estre admis, en une matière de cette qualité.'[17] And the proof of one's affection so charmingly granted by Voiture to Sablé in his letters is doled out to a quite other recipient in the work of Arnauld d'Andilly, who counts it 'une preuve de mon affection et de mon zèle' to have put so much scholarly effort into translating the lives of the desert fathers.[18] Villedieu's proof, I suggest, gathers together scraps of assorted signification gleaned from all of these genres. The *nouvelle* is already a sort of magpie enterprise mingling historical chronicle with the inventions dismissed by Bayle, and the multiple resonances of the term 'preuve' suggest something of the inventive and appropriative way that new genres establish themselves.

Yet Villedieu also grants her grab-bag genre a new and very modern legitimacy by reaching for terms that for her readers would most explicitly recall more deliberately philosophical or scientific language, notably the vocabulary determined by

Descartes's reflections on method, and then the anxious discussions arising from that. (If I were to advance a mathematical formula for Villedieu's text, it would be something like 'Descartes plus disorder'.) Villedieu's vocabulary, one might say, is what happens when the *nouvelle* first reaches towards a Cartesian method and then embroils itself with a language that recalls the Port-Royalist concerns about the nature of proof I described earlier.

Laurent Thirouin has recently and most elegantly suggested the depths of Villedieu's interest in Augustinianism with reference to her moral vocabulary, which appears to be seriously informed and considered.[19] We cannot quite say the same of her narrator's somewhat flip gestures towards a Port-Royalist language of proof, though we can certainly say that their presence indicates something of the author's knowledge of such a language. We know that Villedieu was familiar with a wide range of academic material, and that, as Faith Beasley puts it, 'she worked to win over the academic as well as the worldly public' (*Salons*, p. 148), for example in her defence of Boileau's *Satires*. But Villedieu's deployment of the language of proof speaks of a particularly playful relation to logical procedures. Where, for example, Arnauld and Nicole's *Logique* recommends that one 'prouve[r] demonstrativement toutes les conclusions [...], en ne se servant que des definitions [...] posées', Villedieu observes no such method.[20] Indeed, what Villedieu posits is something rather more like an anti-method, a disorder of philosophy; if in the *Logique* geometrists are said to convince by leaving no ambiguity, by avoiding *équivoques*, and by proving all complicated propositions by drawing on those that have already been demonstrated, then we would have to conclude regretfully that according to these terms the proofs furnished by Villedieu's narrator are not at all 'preuves convaincantes et invincibles' (p. 378). She neither demonstrates nor refutes but rather drops the language of proof into the appropriate moments of the text.

Villedieu's proof might end up looking something more like that of Pascal's *Pensées*, in which the complex language of proof is never allowed to remain monolithic but rather put profoundly into question.[21] For Pascal, proof and belief remain distinct questions: thus in the 'Lettre qui marque l'utilité des preuves par la Machine' he notes

> La foi est différente de la preuve. L'une est humaine, l'autre est un don de Dieu. *Justus ex fide vivit*. C'est de cette foi que Dieu lui-même met dans le cœur dont la preuve est souvent l'instrument. *Fides ex auditu*. Mais cette foi est dans le cœur, et fait dire non *Scio* mais *Credo*.[22]

Gilles Declercq comments that in these lines 'La réflexion pascalienne procède à un déplacement des enjeux de la pensée cartésienne.'[23] Proof is no longer absolute unto itself, but is rather an instrument to bring about belief. We could say that for Villedieu the language of proof is an instrumentalist vocabulary to do the same.

For Pascal too, the problem of proof is in part a problem of narration. How can he explain that some Christians believe without the benefit of proof? Well, one can believe without explaining, as long as there is someone else following along to do the explaining on behalf of the believer:

> J'avoue bien qu'un de ces chrétiens qui croient sans preuves n'aura peut-être pas de quoi convaincre un infidèle, [...] mais ceux qui savent les preuves de la

> Religion prouveront sans difficulté que ce fidèle est véritablement inspiré de Dieu, quoiqu'il ne pût le prouver lui-même.[24]

He who supplies the proof on behalf of the faithful is then a sort of narrator-figure. (Alone I can only believe and cannot prove, but a knowledgeable narrator can prove on my behalf.) Belief and knowledge are separated out: Pascal, as Gilles Declercq puts it, is drawn to both 'la preuve et son asymptote, c'est-a-dire la connaissance et la croyance, articulant ainsi l'univers demonstratif et argumentative à son altérité' (p. 215). In this separation we can ascertain a person who knows (the novelist-narrator) and a person who believes, that is one who accepts the knowledge of the narrator.

Villedieu's novelistic proofs function something like a Pascalian wager; instead of directly proving that a proposition is true, Villedieu asks instead that we consider an independent notion, that is, the usefulness of belief in the propositions she considers. Thus, we her readers would be better equipped to understand the world if we took on the notion that love is the primary cause of all passions. Villedieu uses the language of proof in the novel as an instrument for generating collective belief.

But there is a fundamental distinction between Pascal and Villedieu. Pascal's art of persuasion targets the unbeliever just as Villedieu's proof targets the reader, but where Pascal seeks to persuade the unbeliever of the existence of God, Villedieu is concerned only to establish her own authority as a writer. If proof is central to the art of persuasion, here she persuades her readers to believe only in her. Villedieu's use of the vocabulary of proof asks not just that the story serve as a sign of something, a proof as a legible example, but also makes the claim that she as narrator has been able to prove something; the form of the narrative itself, voiced in a particular and purportedly clear way, has served as a demonstration. In this light it is significant that Villedieu chooses to cast her justifications often around verbs rather than nouns: 'I have proved', she tells us, rather than 'I demonstrate this proof'.

Villedieu's formulations thus also underline the importance of the first person. For Villedieu the discourse of proof is above all one of personal authority. In contrast, here is the mathematician Pierre Fermat in a letter about his *petit théorème*, first advanced in 1640:

> Je vous avoue tout net (car par avance je vous avertis que je ne suis pas capable de m'attribuer plus que je ne sais, je dis avec la même franchise ce que je ne sais pas) que je n'ai pu encore démontrer [...] cette belle proposition que je vous ai envoyée [...]. Si vous en aviez la preuve assurée, vous m'obligeriez de me la communiquer car, après cela, rien ne m'arrêtera en ces matières.[25]

For Fermat, proofs are to be ascertained and discussed between friends, in dialogue. In their own scholarly way they are as worldly as the maxims I cited earlier; Fermat suggests that the path to knowledge is necessarily shared and collaborative. In contrast, Villedieu insists on proof as a way to shore up the narrator-writer's position. Faith Beasley has argued that the deployment of maxims in *Les Désordres de l'amour*, and in particular in the final sections, suggests that Villedieu wanted to insist that reading and writing was a collaborative and collective exercise, as in the *salon* milieu that was so important to her.[26] Yet Villedieu's deployment of the vocabulary of proof suggests a quite different concern: not with communication or community, as in the maxims and Fermat's consultation, but with her own personal authority.

This insistence on her personal authority is indicated by the strange amalgam of justifications she provides at the end of her second section, where the language of proof suddenly walks into another vocabulary, that of experience.[27] First, Villedieu tells us

> par les deux exemples qui fournissent ce premier et second tome, j'ai, à ce que je pense, suffisamment prouvé que l'amour est le ressort de toutes les autres passions de l'âme [...] J'espère ne rapporter pas de moindres preuves [...] qu'il nous conduit jusques au desespoir. (p. 118)

That is the language of objective proof that we have already seen earlier in the text. But she then turns her attention to her sceptical reader's possible reaction to this, and defends herself against any critique by drawing on the language of experience:

> Je ne doute point qu'en cet endroit plus d'un lecteur ne dise d'un ton irronique que je n'en ais pas toûjours parlé de cette sorte, mais c'est sur cela même que je me fonde pour en dire tant de mal, et c'est pour en avoir fait une parfaite experience que je me trouve autorisée à le peindre avec de si noires couleurs. (p. 118)

Villedieu's vocabulary of justification through experience seems to play on the multiple meanings of the word. The novella's moral direction comes about because of her own personal experience, but with its language of rational proof and its demonstration of particular scenarios the *nouvelle* as a genre also functions as a kind of experiment: what happens when we put such and such a character in such and such a context, and when we ask the *nouvelle* to bear the moral weight of attesting to absolute certainty?

This coupling of demonstrative proof with personal experience is particularly interesting in the light of Villedieu's vexed personal and publishing history. As the young Mlle Desjardins she allied herself with a *sieur* de Villedieu who, after much back and forth, not only failed to marry her but also sold off her private love letters to be published in 1668 by Claude Barbin as *Lettres et billets galants*, despite legal efforts by the lady concerned.[28] Villedieu's relation to the (not strictly legal) name under which she publishes and to her authorship is thus especially intriguing. Faith Beasley has shown how throughout her career Villedieu is concerned with the 'valorization of her authority to publish, an authority founded on worldly experience, knowledge of novels and "usage du monde" as opposed to learned values' and Elizabeth Goldsmith has suggested that Villedieu's insistence on the importance of personal experience (throughout her published work) put her in a risky position because of its shocking 'esthetic of self-exposure'.[29] Beasley argues that Villedieu's resolute employment of the first person is especially significant in her accounts of historical material, suggesting that she 'valorizes her inventions as in fact more authoritative than anything real events could offer'.[30]

We see then that Villedieu pulls together a number of discourses in order to make up her *nouvelle* and to ensure that her writerly and moral authority is recognized: history, the worldly maxim, and the language of proof. If the material of the historical chronicle and the maxim are central to the body of the text, the propositions of proof that I have described here function more as a frame narrative to the story itself. But whereas the frame narratives of novellas like Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* insist on collective and collaborative storytelling (as does the use of the maxim throughout this text), Villedieu's invocation of proof and experience aims first to reinforce her sole authority and only by inference to suggest that fiction more broadly might be a vehicle of authoritative knowledge. What is it that Villedieu's proofs ask us to believe? Most importantly, to believe in the narrator herself, who is hardly distanced at all from the woman whose borrowed name itself bears witness to the fact that the public can be asked to accept something that cannot quite be proved. They ask us to believe in a writer whose personal battles with a quite other tradition of difficult proofs — that of the printing press and its market forces — lie behind her insistence on the novel as a genre of rational demonstration.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. I will be citing from the critical edition of this novel edited by Micheline Cuénin, 2nd edn (Geneva: Droz, 1995). All references made parenthetically in the text.
2. Faith Beasley, *Revising Memory: Women's Fictions and Memoirs in Seventeenth-Century France* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990). On Villedieu more specifically, see also Beasley, *Salons, History and the Creation of Seventeenth-Century France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 147–66 (cited throughout this article as *Salons*). See also *Madame de Villedieu ou les audaces du roman*, ed. by Nathalie Grande and Edwige Keller-Rahbé, special issue of *Littératures classiques*, 61 (2007); *A Labor of Love: Critical Reflections on the Writings of Marie-Catherine Desjardins (Madame de Villedieu)*, ed. by Roxane Decker Lalande (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000); and, on Villedieu's publishing history, see Elizabeth Goldsmith, 'Publishing Passion: Mme de Villedieu's *Lettres et billets galants*', in *Actes de Wake Forest*, ed. by Milorad M. Margitic and Byron R. Wells (Tübingen: Biblio 17, 1987), pp. 439–49.
3. See Arthur Flannigan, '*Les Désordres de l'Amour*: The Feminization of History', *Esprit Créateur*, 23.2 (summer 1983), 94–106.
4. The question of the 'earliness' of Lafayette's novel has been challenged recently by Nicholas Paige, who argues that instead of seeing *La Princesse de Clèves* as the beginning of a particular generic trajectory, we should instead read it as an anomalous exception in the history of fiction. 'Lafayette's Impossible Princess: On (Not) Making Literary History', *PMLA* 125.4 (October 2010), 1061–77.
5. Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Rotterdam, 1697), entry for Mlle DESJARDINS (Villedieu's birth name).
6. For a reading of the pedagogical strategies of this technique, see Beasley, *Salons*, pp. 164–66.
7. See most recently Monika Kulesza, 'La Lettre et la Maxime, instruments du récit dans *Les Désordres de l'Amour* de Mme de Villedieu', *Littératures classiques*, 61 (winter 2007), 141–50.
8. Beasley observes briefly that 'The stories appear as theorems she is intent on proving, rather than as whimsical fictions' (*Salons*, p. 159) but devotes her attention to the question of the maxim.
9. Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, *La Logique ou l'art de penser*, ed. by Pierre Clair and François Girbal (Paris: Vrin, 1993), p. 18.
10. Cuénin sets out the extent of Villedieu's borrowings from Mézeray in her thorough notes to the critical edition.
11. Corinne Rossari argues about assertions of proof that they are often merely 'un moyen pour le locuteur de confirmer ses choix énonciatifs, sans prouver les faits qui s'y rapportent, et cela par le biais d'un mode de référenciation déictique' (p. 65). Rossari suggests that the language of

proof has 'une base lexicale dont la dénotation est a priori transparente, en renvoyant de manière patente au domaine du vrai'. 'Le Leurre des significations lexicales: L'Exemple de la preuve', *Revue romane*, 40.1 (2005), 65–78 (p. 66).

12. René Descartes, *Méditations métaphysiques* (Paris : GF-Flammarion, 1979), p. 89.
13. For a robust discussion of the pitfalls of describing these texts of the 1670s as an instance of the 'early' novel, with all the teleology that such a description implies, see Nicholas D. Paige's *Before Fiction: The Ancien Régime of the Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).
14. *Les Œuvres de Monsieur de Voiture* (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1656), p. 214.
15. Act V scene 4, line 1600. Richard Goodkin discusses this scene and its use of what he terms 'novelistic discourse' in 'Molière and the Novel', in *Intersections: Actes du 35e congrès annuel de la North America Society for Seventeenth-Century French Literature, Dartmouth College, 8–10 mai 2003, Biblio 17, vol. 161*, ed. by Faith Beasley and Kathleen Wine (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2005), pp. 13–32 (p. 27).
16. I thank Sonia Velazquez for pointing out this structure to me.
17. Nicolas Fouquet, *Recueil des defenses: Inventaire des pieces baillés à la chambre de Justice*, volume 11 (Paris 1667), p. 294. On the playfulness of Vaux, see Claire Goldstein, *Vaux and Versailles: The Appropriations, Erasures, and Accidents That Made Modern France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
18. Arnaud d'Andilly, *Les vies des saints pères des déserts et de quelques saintes* (Paris: Le Petit, 1668), p. 6.
19. Laurent Thirouin, 'Madame de Villedieu et le pseudo-Pascal: Désordres et passions de l'amour', *Littératures classiques*, 61 (winter 2007), 237–58.
20. Arnauld and Nicole, *La Logique ou l'art de penser*, p. 307.
21. On the different kinds of proof in Pascal, see Daniel Clifford Fouke, 'Argument in Pascal's *Pensées*', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 6.1 (January 1989), 57–68.
22. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées, opuscules et lettres*, ed. by Philippe Sellier (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2010), p. 171, fragment 41.
23. Gilles Declercq, 'Résilience de la dialectique: L'Inflexion cartésienne en rhétorique classique', *Origines: Actes du 39e congrès annuel de la North American Society for Seventeenth-Century French Literature, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 10–12 mai 2007, Biblio 17, vol. 180*, ed. by Russell Ganim and Thomas M. Carr (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2009), pp. 201–20 (p. 210).
24. Sellier, fragment 144.
25. Letter of Thursday 18 October 1640, Pierre Fermat to Frénicle de Bessy. In *Œuvres de Fermat*, vol. II, ed. by Paul Tannery and Charles Henry (Paris: Gauthier-Villars et fils, 1894), pp. 207–08.
26. Beasley, *Salons*, pp. 163–66.
27. Nancy K. Miller reminds us that the 'je' of the *Désordres*, unlike the veiled narrator of Lafayette, 'explains and justifies her project in writing'. 'Tender Economies: Madame de Villedieu and the Costs of Indifference', in *Women's Writing in Seventeenth-Century France*, ed. by Nancy K. Miller and Joan Dejean, special issue of *Esprit créateur*, 23.2 (summer 1983), 80–93 (p. 90).
28. For an analysis of this moment in Villedieu's relation to the public, see Faith Beasley, *Salons*, p. 150.
29. Beasley, *Salons*, p. 151; Goldsmith, 'Publishing Passion', p. 440.
30. *Salons*, p. 154.

CHAPTER 7

❖

François Bernier: Philosophers' Fictions / Traveller's Visions

Isabelle Moreau

Seventeenth-century France witnessed a long and complex process of disciplinary specialization, as the principal institutions of cultural and scientific activity took shape.[1] Philosophy emerged from the universities, and book markets began to expand and diversify.[2] Literature was finding its own favoured places. These transformations were accompanied by an unprecedented effort to codify the language, forms and genres of writing — not always without resistance. From the end of the sixteenth century, philosophy asserted its autonomy from theology,[3] and its scope extended into the domains of the human and natural sciences.[4] As for fiction, it was at once everywhere and nowhere.[5] It was making its presence felt in areas from astronomy to law, even as the novel disguised itself as *nouvelle historique*, and travel narratives pretended to be factual accounts. In the dictionaries of the period, fiction referred both to the act of dissimulating and to the result thereof, but its fields of application were surprisingly diverse. Fiction generally aroused suspicion; but it contributed to the formation of philosophical ideas and found validation in the field of law. Following its very early usage in astronomy, it infiltrated the domains of physics and mathematics with Descartes, Roberval and Leibniz in the Classical Age. Resistance to fiction was matched by the fascination it aroused. What proof value could be ascribed to fiction? Did it function in the same way as hypothesis? What to make of it in the field of natural science where it was deployed alongside the vocabulary of observation and experience? There was no consensus on these questions. The writers of the period put fiction, this new conceptual tool, to the test; some adopted it, others rejected it.

Among those sceptical about the uses of fiction in philosophy was François Bernier. A physician, philosopher and traveller, Bernier eludes hasty categorization on account of the diversity of his institutional and *mondain* affiliations. In the 1650s he acquired a grounding in Epicurean philosophy with Gassendi, and he frequented learned circles hosted, most notably, by Jacques-Auguste De Thou, François Luillier, François de La Mothe Le Vayer, the Dupuy brothers, and Marin Mersenne. Following a lengthy stay in India he became one of the staunchest *habitués* of the scientific and literary salon of Madame de La Sablière. At that time he devoted himself to Parisian life and to philosophy, and published his two major works. These were the *Voyages* (1670–71), an epistolary work which secured his literary renown;[6] and the *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi* (1674–84),[7] in which he defended a rival philosophy to Cartesianism. Between these two apparently heterogeneous collections there are numerous points of intersection. Just as philosophy pervades the *Voyages*, so the *Voyages* are cited repeatedly in the *Abrégé*. The experience of the traveller plays a pivotal role in the philosophical stance adopted by Bernier, as it does in his apparent rejection of what he terms the 'fictions' of philosophers. Bernier demonstrates a certain resistance to the theoretical systematization which overwhelmed the field of physical science in the seventeenth century.[8] His discourse is nonetheless still conditioned by the processes of fictional writing. If the record of Bernier's practical experience is to be an antidote to the fictions of philosophers, it entails a recurrent generic instability. The *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi* is replete with anecdotes borrowed from the *Voyages*. The voice of the traveller is superimposed on that of the philosopher, borrowing from the novelist's repertoire the art of the story, the anecdote, and fictional dialogue.

In the autumn of 1655 Bernier set out from France on a voyage to the Orient which would last thirteen years. From 1659 to around 1667 he resided at the Mogul court of Aurangzeb, accompanying it on its peregrinations. He had the good fortune to enter into the service of the minister Daneshmend Khan,[9] the 'Seigneur Savant' with whom he conducted an intellectual exchange of exceptional quality. Bernier wrote these words about his master and protector:

> Il ne peut non plus se passer de philosopher tout l'après-dîner sur les livres de Gassendi et Descartes, sur le globe et sur la sphère, ou sur l'anatomie, que de donner le matin tout entier aux grandes affaires du royaume en qualité de secrétaire d'Etat pour les affaires étrangères et de grand maître de la cavalerie. (*Voyages*, p. 369)

Unfortunately, we have no written trace of these exchanges. We must be content with the two-volume compilation that Bernier published under the title of *Voyages* on his return to France. Just as the *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi* would contain an integrated account of his travel experience, so his *Voyages* already contained an entire letter on the doctrine of atoms and on the nature of human understanding. Addressed to Chapelle (a somewhat unruly former student of the learned Gassendi), this letter is a philosophical manifesto written in a conversational 'style asiatique' (p. 353) as well as being an introduction to the philosophy of Gassendi.[10]

Firstly one must note the ethos assumed by Bernier. Defining himself as a 'voyageur [...] nourri dans l'école des atomes', Bernier makes no claim to have found 'de nouvelles raisons dans les Indes' (p. 353) concerning the delicate problem of the human soul and of animate matter in general. Quite to the contrary, he simultaneously appropriates the sceptical Cicero of the *Academica* and the position of Gassendi regarding the so-called inventions of the moderns,[11] recalling that 'tout ce qu'en ont dit les Modernes ou n'est rien, ou n'est pas nouveau' (p. 353). He himself has studied the matter with the greatest care and capitalizes on his travels to 'confér[er] cent fois' the opinion of the 'plus grands hommes' with what was said by authors 'tant anciens que modernes, qu'arabes, que persans, qu'indiens' (p. 349). Travel is fully integrated with sceptical experience and proves to be an excellent antidote to presumptive knowledge. Here Bernier assumes the inverse rhetorical position to that of Descartes in the *Discours de la méthode*. In place of the real voyage, in its own way as unsatisfying as the study of ancient philosophers, Descartes offered the 'vaste allegorie de l'*homo viator*'[12] presented from the viewpoint of its favourable culmination. Bernier, for his part, is far from affirming his voice in a magisterial tone. Instead of presenting his own itinerary as exemplary, he emphasizes his doubts and makes no claims to have discovered the truth. If his travels have brought him anything, it is above all a manner of philosophical thinking 'en style asiatique' (p. 353) — a style opposed to the Cartesian ideal of 'chaînes de raison', 'dont les géomètres ont coutume de se servir, pour parvenir à leurs plus difficiles démonstrations'.[13] Bernier assumes an amicable tone and does not shun the digressions and chiaroscuros beloved of the Asiatic lands he had so long frequented.[14]

The letter is equally valuable as a philosophical manifesto and allows us to situate Bernier more clearly in the contemporary philosophical landscape. His first target is ancient materialism and its *libertin* avatars. Not without irony, perhaps (and here we encounter the chiaroscuros of his writing), Bernier distances himself from 'Messieurs les esprits forts' (p. 347) who wrongly confuse 'authentic' Gassendism with a vacuist and materialist atomism that is strictly Epicurean. If he refuses to believe that 'dans l'homme, et même dans tout l'univers, il n'y ait rien autre chose que de corporel, que mouvements locaux et corporels, que corps, qu'atomes, que matière' (p. 358), he refuses in equal measure the extreme opposite, which consists in believing that 'dans l'homme, il y ait quelque chose de divin, quelque particule de la divinité ou quelque chose de semblable' (pp. 357–58). In this second group of targets we find the partisans of the theory of the world soul:

> C'est un blasphème insupportable et hors de raison de quelques stoïciens, des cabalistes de Perse et des brahmanes des Indes, qui, pour reconnaître clairement la noblesse et la perfection de l'esprit de l'homme, ont mieux aimé se jeter dans cette extrémité que de le croire si bas et si imparfait que d'être tout corps, tout matière, tout corporel. Je n'ai pas garde de donner dans cette pensée: vous verrez dans la lettre de Monsieur Chapelain que je suis bien éloigné de croire que ce soit une opinion soutenable à un philosophe. (p. 358)

In a celebrated passage of the *Voyages* addressed to Chapelain, Bernier aligns ancient Monist pantheism with the Brahmans' exotic image of God within the universe as a spider within its web. Pierre Bayle would recall this very image in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* when he set forth what he had understood of the doctrine of Spinoza.[15]

The final target of Bernier's polemic — but not the least — is the philosophy of Descartes. This time his critique operates on two levels. Bernier generally discredits those who claim to act in the domain of physics as do 'les géomètres' in the realm of mathematics (p. 365). He also underscores the weakness of Descartes's replies to criticism made by Arnauld and Gassendi (pp. 353–54), and denigrates a number of Cartesian postulates without expanding on them, notably that of 'la matière subtile' (p. 352).

We find these three critiques amplified to varying degrees in the *Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi*. They coalesce around a focal point, as revealed by a study of the occurrences of the word 'fiction'. I allude briefly to this point which I have analysed elsewhere.[16] Bernier discredits theories of the structure of the universe, each time on the grounds of physical and logical impossibilities: be it ancient materialism, particularly the *clinamen* of Lucretius invoked to explain the formation of masses in the universe from 'un tricoti et un concours aveugle de petits corps';[17] the latest avatars of the world soul; or else Descartes's narrative of a new genesis from a mass of 'matière subtile'. The term 'fiction' thus signifies a hypothesis in a degraded state, a hypothesis which has begun to generate errors because detached from experience and observation. Bernier's position on the uses of fiction in philosophy forms part of a much broader current of thinking in the Classical Age on correct use of hypotheses in the field of natural science, especially in physics. As both traveller and philosopher, Bernier defends experimental discourse and the experience of the practical investigator. His critique of philosophers' fictions is but the most visible element of a blind opposition to anything unsupported by experience. This allows us to understand Bernier's divergence from a strict interpretation of the *Syntagma Philosophicum*. As Sylvia Murr has demonstrated,[18] Bernier was not content merely to translate the monumental work of his master. Bernier summarizes — but he also inserts and occasionally adds commentary. He inserts comments drawn from his travel experience. Furthermore he replaces certain lines of argument developed by Gassendi which had become obsolete, relating to experiments on the vacuum, and in the domain of medicine (notably in anatomy and physiology). Finally he adds an entire series of doubts: the doubts of the *Traité du Libre et du Volontaire* aimed at Malebranche and the *Doutes sur quelques-uns des principaux chapitres de son Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi* first published separately in 1681, then republished in volume II of the 1684 edition of the *Abrégé*.

Such additions form part of Bernier's efforts to modernize the framing of philosophical problems, as Sylvia Murr has shown. In this respect the *Abrégé*'s rhetoric is closely linked to the philosophical context. Concern for establishing a worldly reputation inflects its form, terminology and choice of speculative themes: Bernier gives priority to those which dominated conversations in the circles and salons he frequented. The *Doutes sur quelques-uns des principaux chapitres de son Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi*, nonetheless, merit our interest in that they enable us to pinpoint the originality of Bernier the philosopher. As he himself wrote in the preface 'Au lecteur' of 1681:

> Ces doutes sont non pas sur le fond de cette philosophie, car je ne crois pas qu'on puisse raisonnablement philosopher sur un autre système que celui des atomes et du vide, mais sur certaines matières qui ne laissent pas d'être fort considérables, tels que sont l'espace, le lieu, le mouvement, le temps, l'éternité et quelques autres. Au reste, que ces doutes soient bien ou mal fondés, vous en jugerez. Ce petit livre vous servira toujours à deux choses; l'une à vous faire voir la pauvreté de toutes nos philosophies (il y a plus de trente ans que je philosophe tres-persuadé de certaines choses; et voilà cependant que je commence à en douter); l'autre, à donner comme une idée générale de la philosophie de Gassendi, laquelle, après tout, me semble la plus raisonnable de toutes, la plus simple, la plus sensible et la plus aisée.[19]

Here again we encounter the sceptical ethos of the philosophical traveller, and also his pragmatism. Bernier's criticism tends in the direction of refusing abstract terms 'qui comme tous les autres de cette sorte, nous portent à l'erreur, si nous concevons quelque chose d'abstrait, ou de separé du concret'.[20] Equally his critique stems from a desire to simplify philosophical discourse: 'il arrive souvent à force de vouloir trop penetrer, que nous gastons tout, que nous obscurcissons les choses les plus claires et que nous faisons des difficultez oû il n'y en a point'.[21] For example, he takes issue with the Gassendian concept of space, because when defined in this way space can only be 'une chose qui n'est point, qui n'existe point, [...] qui n'est qu'une pure fiction, ou un Estre purement imaginaire'.[22] Bernier's doubts concern not so much the principles of Gassendi's philosophy as certain categories necessary to describe the physical world. Fiction is so much more difficult to hunt down when it has to be sought at the level of narrative sequence, of the sentence, or even of the phrase. In other words, fiction has hidden away at the heart of concepts; and this involves the same mechanism as that which subordinates observation to conceptualization and explanation, 'au lieu qu'un Physicien doit rechercher ce que les choses sont en effet, et conformer sa conception aux choses':[23]

> Cecy supposé, j'estime que demesme que pour connoistre la nature du Lieu, il ne faut point tant subtiliser, ni avoir recours à je ne sçais quel Estre eternel, et immobile qui ne se trouve point en Nature, le Lieu n'estant autre chose que *la superficie du corps qui environne*, ainsi pour connoistre la nature du Temps, il ne faut point aussi avoir recours à je ne sçais quel Flux eternel, et uniforme, qu'on ne sçauroit trouver nulle part; [...]! En un mot à un Estre qui n'est que dans la seule imagination; le Temps, comme dit Lucrece, n'estant assurement rien de soy, rien d'abstrait ou de separé du mouvement des corps. (*Abrégé*, t. II Doute 12, p. 317)

The philosopher who has recourse to 'un Estre [...] qui ne tombe nullement sous les Sens', a being that Bernier considers 'purement imaginaire',[24] is merely chasing shadows. The methodological error is all the more destructive here in that the fiction it fashions suppresses all the benefits of a conceptual procedure based on experience and observation.

Since Bernier sought a philosophical discourse which would directly represent reality, he strove to promote a mode of philosophical thinking that would shun the seductive fallacies of fiction. In the *Abrégé* these efforts manifest themselves in two ways: through additions of his own creation, and through a semantic reworking at the conceptual level.

Earlier I alluded to the doubts which Bernier the philosopher inserted into his *Abrégé*. To pursue this line of analysis it is necessary to explain Bernier's difficulties in setting forth certain Gassendian concepts. Notable here was the concept of the 'animation générale du monde', dangerously close to the fiction of the world soul. There is a great deal to be said here on the various uses of analogy in philosophical discourse — but this would be too great a digression.[25] I will focus instead on the traveller's additions insofar as they pose a specific problem of genre. Writers of travel narratives lay claim to an unadorned, simple style: the absence of affectation should ensure that the travel narrative is identified as belonging to the genre of history as document. Yet at the same time it derives its narrative forms and scene-setting techniques from novelistic genres. To put it another way: the travel narrative is an eminently unstable genre. Once Bernier started to use extracts from his *Voyages* to substantiate his *Abrégé* we can assume henceforth that this generic instability permeates his philosophical discourse.

In his *Abrégé* Bernier regularly refers the reader to his practical experience, conveyed notably in his use of self-quotation. Points of convergence between the heterogeneous genres of philosophical treatise and travel narrative are made conspicuous through differentiated enunciation and avoidance of the impersonal style. Granted, Bernier readily uses the third-person pronoun 'on'; but equally he employs 'nous', and 'je' is abundantly present. When he chooses not to follow the *Syntagma* to the letter it is either because he feels the need to comment on particular points, or to include more substantial developments of his own. But at each deviation, however minute, Bernier signals the enunciative discontinuity either before or after his insertion, sharply distinguishing his voice from that of the author, whom he calls 'notre philosophe' or 'notre auteur'. The anecdotes he relates may be new material. Thus in volume II, in the chapter entitled 'De l'existence et providence de Dieu', Bernier adds to the expected disquisition on the proof of God's existence from contemplation of nature, the remarks of his master Daneshmend Khan:

> N'ajouteray-je point icy qu'entre les preuves qui regardent la Providence il n'y en a point qui plûssent davantage à Daneche-mend-kan un des plus celebres sçavants de l'Asie, et des puissans Omerahs de la Cour du Grand Mogol, que celles qui se tirent de l'Usage des Parties. *Il n'y a pas*, me disoit ce Grand homme, *jusqu'aux parties les plus grossieres, les Parties naturelles de l'Homme, et de la Femme, qui ne marquent une destination particuliere à leurs usages ordinaires, et par consequent une souveraine Providence qui dans le dessein de multiplier, et perpetuer ses Ouvrages, les y ait expressement destinées, tant elles paroissent formées, ajustées, et appropriées l'une pour l'autre,*[...]. (*Abrégé*, t. II, livre. I, chap. XVII, pp. 176–77)

The comments attributed to his master are related in direct speech and constitute a burlesque praise of male and female genitalia and of sexual pleasure: a short, discreetly irreverent aside before concluding the chapter. Bernier promises to return in due course to the more serious arguments of Gassendi, 'car notre Autheur semble s'estre surpassé luy-mesme en cecy, tant il paroit avoir esté persuadé de l'existence d'un Souverain Estre, et d'une Divine Providence!' (p. 177).

For the most part, however, the additions are verbatim recapitulations of passages from the *Voyages*: these are clearly identified and identical to the source text in all but a few details — except where several pages are summarized in a new development that retains only the main argument. Bernier's recapitulations may be intended to inform, and to make up for gaps or errors in Gassendi's knowledge: hence the chapters on the source of the Nile and rain cycles of Ethiopia. Bernier wrote to Thévenot:

> je vous donnerai de bonne foi ce que j'en ai écrit après avoir vu deux fois cet accroissement et l'avoir examiné très curieusement, et après avoir remarqué des choses dans les Indes qui m'ont donné de plus grands avantages pour cela que n'en pouvait avoir ce grand homme [Gassendi] qui en a si ingénieusement et si doctement écrit, quoiqu'il n'eût vu l'Égypte que dans son cabinet. (*Voyages*, p. 448)

Here we note the imposing register of the eye witness, characteristic of travel narratives. Bernier's geographical knowledge is not only bookish, but also a practical knowledge combining direct personal experience and first-hand accounts. Bernier is all the more categorical on this matter, being in a position to corroborate the testimony of the Reverend Fathers of the Company of Jesus Almeida, Alphonso Mendez and Hieronimo Lobo, who all had long stays in Ethiopia.

> Leur temoignage me semble mesme d'autant plus considerable, qu'il s'accorde non seulement avec les Lettres qu'autrefois David Roy d'Ethiopie ecrivit au Pape Clement VIII et à Emanuel Roy de Portugal, mais aussi avec ce que j'en ay appris à Moka proche de Babelmandel de plusieurs Marchands d'Ethiopie, et entre autres d'un nommé Murat Armenien d'Alep, qui estoit depuis long-temps habitué dans le Pays, et que j'ay veu depuis Ambassadeur du Roy d'Ethiopie à la Cour du Grand Mogol: Voyez la Carte suivante qui a esté tirée sur l'Original que nous devons aux soins de l'illustre Monsieur Thevenot.[26]

Here Bernier's discourse is the discourse of authority, a display of certain knowledge. In place of an erroneous *savoir de cabinet* he may legitimately propose his own travel narratives and present himself as an authority in learned circles — indeed, had he not, on his return from India, corrected the 'celebre Monsieur de la Chambre' who believed that 'le debordement du Nil venoit de la fermentation et ebullition de la Terre Nitreuse d'Egypte'?[27] An 'ingenious' opinion (in other words, a 'fiction') which does not stand up to empirical observation. By dint of the very same observation he justifies hypotheses on the source of rain, springs and rivers, and ventures passing critiques here and there of certain ancient opinions, or of Gassendi's theories.

The testimony of the traveller is not always at odds with the knowledge of the armchair philosopher: the now well-worn *topos* of traveller's observation versus the palimpsest of authorities is coupled with the ideal, shared by a number of travellers, of the complementarity of ancient and modern sources. When Bernier evokes the virtue of frugality in Chapter VII, he concludes a series of examples drawn from Antiquity with a 'Peinture des Diogenes des Indes':

> A propos de tout ceci, je ne dois, ce semble, pas omettre ce que je sçais de la vie des Indiens Orientaux, quand ce ne seroit que pour faire voir que toutes ces belles choses que nous venons de dire, ne sont pas de pures Speculations Philosophiques, mais qu'il y a des peuples entiers qui menent une vie aussi frugale, et qui se contentent d'aussi peu de chose soit pour le boire, ou le manger, soit pour les habillemens, que tous ces Cyniques, Stoiciens, et Epicuriens.[28]

The portrait of these 'Fakirs [...] qui aussi bien que Diogene vont tout nuds', aims to give philosophical speculations a renewed relevance, offering a concrete application of a moral philosophical problem. Fakirs, Brahmans and 'Banyanes' indeed eat very little and drink only water, 'et cependant ils vivent dumoins aussi tranquillement, aussi joyeux, et aussi contens que nous, beaucoup plus sains, dumoins aussi forts et aussi robustes' (p. 180). This exotic illustration of virtuous frugality is not however lacking in irony when we recall that, in the original text of the *Voyages*, the portrait of the 'Fakirs' was largely derogatory:

> Toutes ces choses si extraordinaires, à vous dire le vrai, me surprenaient fort dans le commencement: je ne savais qu'en dire et qu'en penser. Tantôt je les considérais comme quelques restes, ou comme les auteurs de cette ancienne et infâme secte cynique, sinon que je ne remarquais en eux que brutalité et ignorance, et qu'ils me semblaient plutôt des arbres qui se remuaient un peu d'un lieu à autre que des animaux raisonnables; tantôt je les considérais comme gens entêtés de religion; mais comme j'ai déjà dit, je ne pouvais remarquer en tout cela aucune ombre de vraie piété; tantôt je pensais en moi-même que cette vie paresseuse, fainéante et indépendante de gueux pourrait bien avoir quelque chose d'attrayant; tantôt que la vanité, qui se fourre partout et qui se trouve aussi souvent sous le manteau rapetassé d'un Diogène que sous les bons habits d'un Platon, pourrait être ce ressort qui faisait jouer tant de machines. Et puis, faisant encore réflexion sur la misérable et austère vie qu'ils menaient, je ne savais plus quel jugement en porter. (*Voyages*, p. 319)

Here we see how the testimony of the practical observer acts as a counterweight to those elements of philosophical discourse liable to excessive speculation. The same practical concerns move Bernier to supplement the Gassendian critique of astrologers' false knowledge, in these terms:

> Au reste, on ne trouvera peutestre pas mauvais que je mesle icy quelque chose de ce que j'ay dit des Astrologues dans ma Relation des Estats du grand Mogol, quand ce ne seroit que pour nous delasser un peu l'Esprit de cette grande application où M. Gassendi nous a tenu jusques à présent? Voicy mes termes.[29]

Apart from one or two stylistic alterations which emphasize the personal involvement of the author, the text is an almost identical reproduction. Bernier relates here his observations on Indian astrologers, supplemented with a famous 'conte' that portrays the humiliation of a court astrologer confronted with the rather uncouth common sense of a head gardener.[30] This passage is clearly intended to entertain, to put the reader at ease: at the heart of the philosophical treatise, it introduces a different type of narrative as well as different sort of logic. Just as the philosopher makes way for the historical and empirical 'Je', the (philosophical) example becomes anecdotal, and this transition is marked by the use of tenses and the occasional departures from the impersonal present tense in the narrative.

Is this fiction's return? Has Bernier banished philosophers' fictions only to smuggle in fable and literary invention? This point is open to debate. For Bernier the traveller's experience remains an antidote to philosophers' fictions. Although his discourse does not totally bypass the processes of fictional writing, his anecdotes do not belong to the tradition of *mirabilia* as such.[31] There are no acephalous monsters to be found in the *Voyages*. Moreover, when Bernier relates the 'merveilles' of a spring which he went to see on the recommendation of his master, his purpose is to put forward a rational explanation for the phenomenon of its irregular flow.

> Les gentils ont là sur le bord du réservoir un petit *deüra* ou temple d'idole de Brare, qui est un de leurs *deütas* ou fausses divinités, et c'est pour cela qu'ils appellent cette fontaine Send-brary, comme qui dirait eau de Brare, et qu'ils viennent là de toutes parts en pèlerinage pour se baigner et sanctifier dans cette eau miraculeuse. Ils font sur l'origine de cette eau plusieurs fables que je ne vous rapporterai point, parce que je n'y vois aucune ombre de vérité. Pendant cinq

> ou six jours que je demeurai là, je fis tous mes efforts pour trouver la raison de cette merveille. (*Voyages*, 418–19)

Bernier replaces the narrative of pagan 'fables' with an account of the steps he undertook to discover the 'causes' of the 'prétendu miracle' (p. 419). The explanation he puts forward remains in the realm of the hypothetical, yet it is an appreciably probable hypothesis. His 'imagination' is 'd'autant plus raisonnable' (p. 420) in that it takes into account the indigenous topography, corroborating the testimonies of local inhabitants. In the *Voyages* Bernier's interest in marvels and miracles extends only as far as his capacity to demonstrate their underlying causes.[32] In the case of the marvellous spring he puts forward a 'raisonnable' explanation of an extraordinary phenomenon. Elsewhere in the *Voyages* he exposes human deceitfulness, that of astrologers who frequent the court as well as that of pagans and Mullah miracle-makers.

When Bernier recapitulates in the *Abrégé* what he had written about astrological imposture in the *Voyages* his aim is not radically different: he is still concerned with denouncing imposture. This borrowing from the *Voyages* concludes a series of three chapters devoted to astrologers, in a volume which is itself devoted to the physics of celestial bodies. The change in tone is palpable; but the story of the gardener is not a tale told for its own sake — or at least, it is not only that. For one thing, Bernier relates it in indirect speech: he does not explicitly say whether he heard the story at court, or who passed it on to him; but we can reasonably assume that it was indeed circulating in the milieux he frequented, notably those of his master Daneshmend Khan. Whether the story was invented or simply embellished matters little: its performativity is what matters, and this is certainly real. The story forms part of the 'discours' attributed to 'des gens entendus', who are critical of judicial astrology. In his *Voyages* Bernier barely outlines the expected parallel between the judicial astrology which ran riot at the court of the great Mogul and that which was rife in European courts.[33] Rather, this whole development in the *Abrégé*, borrowed from the *Voyages*, is preceded by another anecdote — this one true — concerning the astrologer Morin:

> Je pourrois icy rapporter en detail l'Horoscope de M. Maridat Conseiller au Grand Conseil, dans laquelle on verroit que l'Astrologue Jean Baptiste Morin qui l'a dressée a aussi bien reüssi que Nostradamus dans celle de M. Suffredy; mais tout cela est tellement plein de sottises, de badineries, et de faux evenemens, et sent tellement le Charlatan, et la Bohemiene qui ne bute qu'à tromper, et à attraper une piece d'argent, que j'ay de la peine à m'y arrester. § Je diray seulement à la honte eternelle de cet Astrologue Morin, que voyant que M. Gassendi qui se mocquoit de son Astrologie Judiciaire estoit infirme, et atteint d'une fluxion sur la poitrine, il fut assez impudent pour predire et faire sçavoir à tout le monde par un Imprimé expres qu'il mourroit sur la fin de Juillet, ou au commencement d'Aoust de l'année 1650, pretendant par là eriger un Trophée à son Astrologie; et cependant M. Gassendi ne se porta jamais mieux qu'en ce temps-là, et il reprit tellement de forces qu'il me souvient que le cinquieme de Fevrier de l'année suivante, nous montasmes ensemble la Montagne de Toulon pour faire les Experiences du Vuide. (*Abrégé*, t. IV, 4^{e} partie, chap. XII, p. 395)

Bernier had in fact participated in the quarrel between Gassendi and Morin with two Latin pamphlets in the period 1651–53. The example cited above proves that the best pamphlet is no match for the well-turned short anecdote when it comes to getting the audience on one's side. The Morin example illustrates the bankruptcy of judicial astrology better than the finest possible *raisonnement*. Similarly, the views of the 'entendus' at the Court of the great Mogul did not vex the astrologers as much as 'ce conte qui s'est rendu fameux' concerning the king, the astrologer and the gardener. Thus deployed, this story has the flavour of a real-life anecdote.

Moreover this example could be compared with the fictitious dialogue in the *Abrégé* between a Dervish and a Turk on the subject of the fatalism that held sway in the Orient.[34] Here yet another step towards fiction seems to have been taken. The dialogue of the Turk appears in indirect speech, following an introduction which clearly underscores its exemplarity and its constructedness:

> [...] comment pensez-vous qu'un Turc, par exemple, excuse ses crimes quand un Derviche entreprend de luy faire quelque remontrance? *Hé quoy, Derviche,* dit-il, *est-ce que tu ne sçais pas aussi bien que moy, que tout est ecrit là haut, que ce sont des Caracteres ineffaçables, et des Decrets eternels et irrevocables? Ne conviens-tu pas aussi avec moy, que cette pretendüe Liberté, ce pretendu pouvoir à faire, ou à ne faire pas, à faire bien, ou à faire mal, est un vain phantôme des Iahours* ou Infidelles, *et par consequent qu'il n'y a au plus en nous que du Volontaire, que de la pente, de l'inclination, ce qui est bien eloigné de ce qu'ils appellent Libre, de ce qu'ils appellent Liberté?* [...] (VII, 3, 423–24)

The theatrical staging, the vehemence of the speech, evidently derive their effects from the trusty art of oratory. It is uncertain whether Bernier would have acknowledged accusations of fabrication. He says elsewhere in the *Voyages* (p. 161): 'il est impossible qu'on puisse savoir et rapporter ces sortes des choses mot pour mot et qu'on n'y mette rien du sien'. The Turk's speech is unquestionably written in a European idiom rather than 'en style asiatique', but it is grounded in reality: 'ce sont là les discours, et les excuses ordinaires de ces malheureux Mahumetans, ou plutost ces blasphemes qui m'ont souvent fait trembler ou en les lisant dans leurs Livres, ou en les entendant de leur bouche' (VII, 424). In the *Abrégé* the Turk's speech starkly illustrates the dangers of a belief in strict predestination. It is the culmination of a lengthy discussion of the delicate problem of free will also presented in the form of a dialogue. Thus, if Bernier allows himself to speak his mind on a subject as controversial as this, without being a theologian, he does so under the auspices of a different authority. It is because he had 'longtemps demeuré parmy les Nations entestées de Predestination' (VII, 423) that Bernier denounces the dangers of such a doctrine. His experience as a traveller is what enables him to shift the debate from the register of theological speculation to that of political pragmatism, without further trifling 'à reveiller des Difficultez qui ne servent qu'à embarraser les Esprits' (VII, 427).

In Bernier's writings, the rejection of philosophical speculation entails the promotion of observation and personal experience. The stories he relates are neither text-book examples, nor thought experiments in the abstract. In this sense they do not conform to the scheme of philosophical fiction, at least as it was theorized and practised at the time. Bernier's method does not exclude theorization, but subordinates it to the experience of the traveller: his anecdotes are real-life anecdotes, or they are constructed on the basis of real-life experience. In this way, they are true: 'ce ne sont point des visions de Voyageur' (VII, 248). What we find here is a tendency towards a 'realism' which would have great difficulty in establishing itself, if the embittered declarations of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, formulated scarcely a century later, are anything to go by:

> Je suis voyageur et marin; c'est-à-dire, un menteur, et un imbécile aux yeux de cette classe d'écrivains paresseux et superbes qui, dans les ombres de leur cabinet, philosophent à perte de vue sur le monde et ses habitants, et soumettent impérieusement la nature à leurs imaginations. Procédé bien singulier, bien inconcevable de la part de gens qui, n'ayant rien observé par eux-mêmes, n'écrivent, ne dogmatisent que d'après des observations empruntées de ces mêmes voyageurs auxquels ils refusent la faculté de voir et de penser.[35]

Appendix

Tous ces discours déplaisaient beaucoup aux astrologues, mais rien ne les fâchait tant que ce conte qui s'est rendu fameux: que le grand Shah Abbas, roi de Perse, avait fait bêcher et préparer un petit lieu dans son sérail pour faire un jardin; les petits arbres étaient tout prêts et le jardinier prétendait de les planter le lendemain; cependant l'astrologue, faisant l'homme d'importance, dit qu'il fallait prendre le *sahet* favorable pour les planter, afin qu'ils pussent bien réussir. Shah Abbas en fut content, l'astrologue prit ses instruments, feuilleta ses livres, fit ses calculs et conclut qu'à raison de telle et telle conjoncture et regards des planètes, il était nécessaire de les planter à l'heure même. Le maître-jardinier, qui ne songeait à rien moins qu'à l'astrologue, ne se trouva pas là présent, mais on ne laissa pas de mettre la main à l'œuvre: l'on fit des trous et on planta tous ces arbres, Shah Abbas lui-même les posant dans leur place pour qu'on pût dire que c'était des arbres plantés de la propre main de Shah Abbas. Le maître-jardinier, qui revint sur le soir, fut bien étonné de trouver la besogne faite et, voyant que cela n'était point selon le lieu propre et l'ordre qu'il avait destinés, qu'un abricotier par exemple était dans le solage d'un pommier et un poirier dans celui d'un amandier, bien fâché contre l'astrologue, fit tout arracher les arbrisseaux et les coucha comme il les avait laissés avec un peu de terre sur la racine pour le lendemain. Incontinent, on en donna nouvelle à l'astrologue et lui à Shah Abbas, qui fit aussitôt venir le jardinier et qui, en colère, lui demanda pourquoi il avait été si osé que d'arracher ces arbres qu'il avait lui-même plantés de sa main; qu'au reste, on avait pris très exactement le *sahet;* que jamais on n'y reviendrait, qu'on n'en saurait jamais trouver un si bon et qu'ainsi il avait tout gâté et tout perdu. Le rustaud de jardinier, qui avait un peu de vin de Chiraz dans la tête, regarda l'astrologue de travers et lui dit ces trois mots en grondant et en jurant: '*Billah, billah*, il fallait bien que ce fût un admirable *sahet*, celui que tu as pris pour ces arbres, astrologue de malheur; ils ont été plantés aujourd'hui à midi et ce soir ils ont été arrachés!' Quand Shah Abbas entendit ce raisonnement, il se mit à rire, tourna le dos à l'astrologue et se retira. (*Voyages*, pp. 166–67)

Notes to Chapter 7

1. Alain Viala, *Naissance de l'écrivain: Sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique* (Paris: Minuit, 1985), p. 8.
2. Dinah Ribard, *Raconter, vivre, penser: Histoires de philosophes, 1650–1766* (Paris: Vrin, 2003), pp. 7–29.
3. Ian Maclean, 'The Readership of Philosophical Fictions: The Bibliographical Evidence', in *Philosophical Fictions and the French Renaissance*, ed. by Neil Kenny (London: Warburg Institute, 1991), pp. 7–15 (pp. 8–9).
4. The term philosophy is still understood here in its broad early modern sense and therefore covers the investigation of natural and human phenomena alike. Cf. Neil Kenny, 'Introduction' in *Philosophical Fictions and the French Renaissance*, pp. 1–6 (p. 1): 'Philosophy' is a 'portmanteau category for all investigations into human and natural phenomena'.
5. *Fiction and the Frontiers of Knowledge in Europe, 1500–1800*, ed. by Richard Scholar and Alexis Tadié (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 'Introduction', pp. 1–15.
6. I refer to the following edition: *Un Libertin dans l'Inde moghole. Les 'Voyages' de François Bernier (1656–1669)*, ed. by Frédéric Tinguely, Adrien Paschoud and Charles-Antoine Chamay (Paris: Chandeigne, 2008). Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.
7. The following edition is used: François Bernier, *Abrégé de la Philosophie de Gassendi*, 7 vols (Lyon: Anisson, Posuel & Rigaud, 1684); repr. ed. by by Sylvia Murr and Geneviève Stefani (Paris: Fayard, 1992). Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.
8. Isabelle Moreau, 'Fictions across Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century France', in *Fiction and the Frontiers of Knowledge in Europe*, ed. by Scholar and Tadié, pp. 53–69.
9. Daneshmend Khan (Danechmend-Kan, d.1670) was an eminent member of the Mogul courts of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. A merchant who arrived from Persia in 1646, Mohammad Shafi (or Mulla Shafiq Yazdi) was awarded the title of 'Seigneur Lettré' for his great learning. He was notably appointed treasurer of the armed forces and was responsible for 'affaires étrangères', before becoming governor of Delhi. See the 'Répertoire des personnages' in *Voyages* p. 520.
10. See also the analysis of Jean-Charles Darmon, *Philosophie épicurienne et littérature au XVII^{e} siècle: Études sur Gassendi, Cyrano de Bergerac, La Fontaine, Saint-Évremond* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998), pp. 140–47.
11. See Charles Perrault's parallel between Descartes and Gassendi in his *Hommes illustres*. Perrault remarked that Gassendi 'taschoit à faire voir par de favorables interpretations, que les Anciens avoient pensé les mesmes choses qu'on regardoit comme nouvelles' (Ch. Perrault, *Les Hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle avec leurs portraits au naturel* (Paris: Antoine Dezallier, 1697; repr. Geneva: Slatkine reprints, 1970), 2 tomes in 1 vol., I, 63–64.
12. Marc Fumaroli, 'Ego scriptor: Rhétorique et philosophie dans le *Discours de la méthode*', in *Problématique et réception du 'Discours de la méthode' et des 'Essais'*, ed. by H. Méchoulan (Paris: Vrin, 1988), pp. 31–46 (p. 41). Marc Fumaroli has shown how autobiographical narrative in fact depends on a 'mythe', or, in Descartes's terms, a 'fable' (p. 39). The historical and empirical 'Je' that emerges agreeably at the outset of the *Discours*, having studied the great book of the world, decides to confine itself to the 'poêle' in order to retreat more fully within itself. But in reality this 'Je' conceals a transcendental 'Je'. Cf. René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, ed. by G. Rodis-Lewis (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1966; repr. 1992), Première partie, pp. 25, 29–31.
13. R. Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, seconde partie, p. 40. On this point see Pierre-Alain Cahné, *Un autre Descartes: Le Philosophe et son langage* (Paris: Vrin, 1980), p. 16; pp. 25–36.
14. On his return from Asia Bernier was all but obliged to bring with him a 'style asiatique' — in contravention of the expectations of a *mondain* public seduced by the moderate attic style of the modern philosophers. His choice of prose letter is moreover at odds with the norms of the genre, since the prose letter was usually situated in the tradition of the middle style of the *Epistulae ad Atticum* and their 'attic' aesthetic. See the work of Marc Fumaroli, especially the general conclusion of *L'Âge de l'éloquence*, which focuses on the conflicts and mutations of these two rhetorical forms in France (M. Fumaroli, *L'Âge de l'éloquence: Rhétorique et 'res literaria' de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994), pp. 673–706). See also Roger Zuber, *Les 'Belles Infidèles' et la formation du goût classique: Perrot d'Ablancourt et Guez de Balzac*

(Paris: Armand Colin, 1968), pp. 361–70, 391–411; Jean Jehasse, *Guez de Balzac et le génie romain* (Saint-Etienne: Université de Saint-Etienne, [1977]), pp. 441–45; and *Les Formes brèves de la prose et le discours discontinu (XVIe–XVIIe siècles)* ed. by Jean Lafond (Paris: Vrin, 1984).

15. Isabelle Moreau, 'L'Araignée dans sa toile: Mise en images de l'âme du monde de François Bernier et Pierre Bayle à l'*Encyclopédie*', in *Les Lumières en movement: La Circulation des idées au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. by Isabelle Moreau (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2009), pp. 199–228.
16. Isabelle Moreau, 'Fictions across Disciplines', pp. 53–69.
17. *Voyages*, p. 360; *Abrégé*, t. ii, livre 1, chap. 13, p. 117.
18. Sylvia Murr, 'Bernier et Gassendi: Une filiation déviationniste?', in *Gassendi et l'Europe*, ed. by S. Murr (Paris: Vrin, 1997), pp. 71–114; 'Bernier et le gassendisme', *Corpus*, 20–21 (1992), pp. 115–35.
19. Bernier, *Doutes sur quelques-uns des principaux chapitres de son Abrégé de la philosophie de Gassendi*, 'Au lecteur' (Paris: Estienne Michallet, 1681).
20. *Abrégé*, t. ii, Doute 1, p. 264.
21. *Abrégé*, t. ii, Doute 12, p. 319.
22. *Abrégé*, t. ii, Doute 3, p. 276.
23. *Abrégé*, t. ii, Doute 1, p. 266.
24. *Abrégé*, t. ii, Doute 2, p. 269; p. 271.
25. C. Margat-Barberis, 'art. *Fiction*', in *Encyclopédie philosophique universelle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989–).
26. *Abrégé*, t. v, livre 1, chap. iii, p. 43–55 ('De l'Origine du Nil', pp. 44–45); *Voyages*, pp. 448–52.
27. *Abrégé*, t. v, livre 1, chap. iii, p. 48.
28. *Abrégé*, t. vii, livre 1, chap. vi, p. 179–80; *Voyages*, p. 319.
29. *Abrégé*, t. iv, 4e partie, chap. xii: 'Que les Responses par lesquelles les Astrologues taschent d'affermir, et de defendre leurs Dogmes, sont vains et frivoles', pp. 403–05 (p. 403); *Voyages*, pp. 165–67.
30. See Appendix.
31. Frank Lestringant, 'Fortunes de la singularité à la Renaissance: Le Genre de l'*Isolario*', in *Écrire le monde à la Renaissance: Quinze études sur Rabelais, Postel, Bodin et la littérature géographique* (Caen-Orléans: Éditions Paradigmes, 1993), pp. 17–48, especially pp. 30–31.
32. See Frédéric Tinguely, 'Un paradis sans miracles: Le Cachemire de François Bernier', in *Etudes de Lettres*, 3 (2006): 'Voyage et libertinage (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècle)', ed. by F. Tinguely and A. Paschoud, pp. 55–69.
33. *Voyages*, pp. 165–66.
34. *Abrégé*, t. vii, livre 3, chap. iii, pp. 423–24.
35. Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, *Voyage autour du monde par la frégate du Roi 'La Boudeuse' et la flûte 'L'Étoile'*, ed. by Jacques Proust (Paris: Gallimard, Folio classique: 1982), 'Discours préliminaire', pp. 46–47.

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CHAPTER 8

Language, Image, and the Double

John D. Lyons

The double is one of the major themes of Western literature. Such examples as *Amphytrion*, 'William Wilson', and *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* come to mind.[1] It seems to have touched all genres and attracted the attention of major scholars and critics, as we see from Otto Rank's *Der Doppelgänger* (written 1914) to Sylvia Plath's undergraduate thesis on the double in two of Dostoevsky's novels (which she wrote at Smith College before attending Newnham College, Cambridge).[2] Although Marie-Madeleine de Lafayette's romance *Zayde* (1670) concerns the hero's belief or delusion that he has a double who has robbed him of his identity, this narrative is not often discussed as a narrative embodying the *doppelgänger* theme.[3]

However, beyond the simple or narrow sense in which this work can be said to concern the figure of a double, it is worth considering ways in which Lafayette's text goes beyond that basic sense to present us with the more general question of whether discourse and image — speech and picture — are not also *doppelgänger*. That is, whether these two forms of representation are not simply complementary to each other, coexisting peacefully side by side, but rather are rival systems of signs that attempt to convey information about the same objects and interfere with one another to produce conflicts, distortions, and enigmas. In this regard we might say that despite the term 'double' used to describe this phenomenon or theme in many different languages, the 'double' has a troubling non-duality. The double already is rather three than two, belonging somewhere in-between or even in the excluded middle. If I have a double, the double is not *really* or *entirely* me, but the double is not really or entirely 'he' or 'other'. The problem of the double is the problem of a lack of proper boundaries.

This article will briefly consider this matter of the double with respect to three themes that are relevant to *Zayde* and to the period that produced this work.[4] First, the emergence of the idea of the *moi* in the sixteenth century in the wake of Montaigne and the controversies about the *moi* that are reflected in the work of Descartes and Pascal as well as in the 'Querelle des *Lettres*' about Guez de Balzac.[5] As Terence Cave has shown, attempts to define the *moi* in this period often point to a dissociation between the belief in an 'essential' self and outward qualities perceptible to other people.[6] Second, the emergence of the private individual portrait as a dominant genre of pictorial representation in sixteenth-century France when it replaced, to a large extent, the older form of official and hagiographical images of individuals — Lafayette's work raises important questions in regard to this shift. The central complication of the plot arises from the practice of individual portrait painting, projected back from the cultural sphere of the seventeenth-century onto medieval Spain. And finally logocentrism or phonocentrism in Lafayette's work as both the source of the disturbances of the double and the way out of this disturbance. By logocentrism we mean here simply the belief in the positive value and determinate force of the voice in the present over all representations (other than the immediate self-presence and self-presentation), which are conceived as subordinate to the voice and to the presence of a speaking person.[7] Thus, to a logocentrist, not only writing in the usual sense but all graphic or inscribed symbols are merely inferior substitutions for an original spoken word which was more valuable and more 'real', more 'itself' than the written trace.

Although *Zayde* is a well-known work, it will be helpful to recall the major points of the story, set in early tenth-century Spain. Consalve, a young nobleman has fled the court of Léon, feeling betrayed by the woman he loved and by most of his friends. Renouncing love and taking refuge in a small house on the Catalonian coast, where a young woman in Moorish dress is washed-up half-dead on the shore. Although they have no language in common, Consalve falls in love with Zayde and feels certain, from her gestures and from certain incomprehensible but animated comments she makes to a woman companion, that she loves someone who resembles himself. After a separation of several months, during which time Consalve becomes fluent in Zayde's language (Greek) and she learns to speak his (Spanish), they meet again, and Consalve asks to marry her. At this point he finds that the obstacle to their marriage is Zayde's father's decision to marry her to a Muslim nobleman who looks very similar to Consalve, the Prince de Fez. Indeed, Zayde understood from a well-known astrologer that she was 'destined' to marry the man represented in a certain portrait belonging to her father, a portrait thought to represent the Prince de Fez. After considerable discussion, it becomes clear that the astrologer's statement that Zayde was destined to marry this man was not based on astrological studies but simply on an entirely commonsensical use of the knowledge that her father intended to force her to marry this prince. But the portrait was, in fact, a lost portrait of Consalve.

The hero's relation to the woman he loves is troubled by his perception that her perception of him fails to grasp his being as a distinct individual. She sees him as a surface, a visual phenomenon, that looks like the surface of someone else. But Consalve's loss of control over his appearance — his inability to maintain property rights for his visual traits — is only part of the problem of his identity, as he considers it. Zayde cannot, without the help of a shared language, penetrate the surface to arrive at his true self, his *moi*, with its thoughts and feelings. This is a good example of the way in which, for the seventeenth century, the problem of the double, is, so to speak, actually doubled. In the simplest sense the *doppelgänger* theme in *Zayde* is a way of conceiving and describing the duplication of the visual appearance of the hero, the idea that there are two young men who look astoundingly alike. But there is also another kind of *doppelgänger* who makes an appearance in a multitude of writings from this period. Not infrequently during this century writers note the disparity between what the *moi* is to the person immediately concerned and what that same individual is when perceived not as *moi* but as the 'other' — the *autre* or *autrui*. By convention this self and this other, being attached to the same body and usually being known by the same name, are spoken about as if they were a single person. Yet many authors, particularly those who write in what Charles Taylor calls the 'hyper-Augustinian' tradition, comment on the disparities between the individual viewed as 'self' or as 'other', that is, from what is also called the inside and the outside.[8] In this hyper-Augustinian (or Jansenist view), not only is mankind fallen from a better state and incapable of meritorious achievement, but human beings are blinded by their self-love to such an extent that their relation to others and their perception of the other is grotesquely distorted.[9] In Descartes's *Discours de la méthode*, for example, this difference is absolutely foundational insofar as the speaker who undertakes methodical universal doubt locates certainty first at the moment when he is only 'self' and when, in the absence of knowledge of the existence of any 'other' he cannot himself be an 'other' — that is, there is no one to perceive him from any viewpoint outside of the *moi*. And later, in the same *Discours*, Descartes supposes that in regard to other selves the *only* certainty is shifted to the outside in the form of acts, as when he provisionally refuses to believe what people say about the proper way to conduct oneself and simply observes and imitates their actions.[10] In the *Meditations*, Descartes famously pushes the suspicion that the bodies he sees in the street may actually not have any *moi* at all:

> si par hasard je ne regardois d'une fenestre des hommes qui passent dans la rue, à la veuë desquels je ne manque pas de dire que je voy des hommes, tout de mesme que je dis que je voy de la cire; Et cependant que voy-je de cette fenestre, sinon des chapeaux & des manteaux, qui peuvent couvrir des spectres ou des hommes feints qui ne se remuent que par ressors? Mais je juge que ce sont de vrais hommes; et ainsi je comprens, par la seule puissance de juger qui reside en mon esprit, ce que je croyais voir de mes yeux.[11]

Lafayette has, in *Zayde*, created a kind of fictional experiment in which the two main characters must undergo a period in which the other is a being in which outside and inside are radically sundered. In the absence of a common language, even potentially insincere utterances are impossible. In a certain sense this is only a magnification of the situation outlined by Descartes in the *Discours de la méthode*, Nicole in 'De la connaissance de soi-même', and La Rochefoucauld in his *Maximes*. For a good portion of the text the narrator conveys Consalve's attempt to decipher the interior (the *moi*) of Zayde without the aid of language: 'il s'imagina, qu'elle avait vu ce qu'il avait caché; il remarqua sur son visage tant de froideur, et tant de chagrin, qu'il ne douta point, qu'elle ne fût en colère' (p. 107). He realizes also that just as Zayde is largely impenetrable to him, so he is to her without language, and he yearns to convey to Zayde his thoughts about her thoughts. He thinks, for example: 'Si je pouvais au moins vous apprendre, que je sais que vous pleurez un amant, je me trouverais heureux [...]' (p. 113).

The most painful result of the scission of inside and outside, *moi* from the manifestation of *moi* as other to the other, is Consalve's conviction that has been in a certain sense alienated from his own appearance. His features seem now to be those of someone else, at least in Zayde's view. The hero now believes that she views him simply as the *portrait* of someone else, of his own rival for her affections (p. 113). His friend Alphonse points out quite properly that this reasoning is not well supported: 'On est jaloux sans sujet, répliqua Alphonse, quand on est bien amoureux' (p. 111). In the early part of the novel, when we have no evidence to support the idea that there is a double of Consalve, it seems as if this may be a delusion that could be entirely contained within his fevered imagination. After all, of what exactly do the gestures consist that persuade Consalve that he resembles someone else? Here is what the text says: 'Lorsqu'il lui parlait ainsi [speaking to Zayde about his love for her in a language that she does not understand], elle se tournait quelquefois vers Félime avec étonnement, et comme pour lui faire remarquer une ressemblance, dont elle était toujours surprise' (p. 108).

In the absence of any detailed description of the gestures and facial expressions that would convey the sense 'faire remarquer une ressemblance' it is tempting to suppose that Consalve suffers from one of a family of disorders known today as 'delusional misidentification syndrome'. In Consalve's case it causes him to have a particular hatred of his appearance and almost a desire to be invisible when dealing with Zayde. Is it entirely a coincidence that La Fontaine's *Les Amours de Psyché et de Cupidon*, a story in which the male lover insists on remaining invisible to his beloved, appeared only a few months before Lafayette's romance?[12]

However, the fear of having lost control of one's appearance in the eyes of others is not peculiar to Consalve. His experience of this fear is especially acute and has the particularity of emphasizing resemblance over difference — that is, he is obsessed with the idea that the man Zayde loves *is* like him rather than the idea that the man Zayde loves is *different* from him — but the idea that one's physical image is tied to the concept of a being who is fundamentally different from the *moi* is widespread. La Rochefoucauld writes that: 'La constance en amour est une inconstance perpétuelle, qui fait que notre cœur s'attache successivement à toutes les qualités de la personne que nous aimons, donnant tantôt la préférence à l'une, tantôt à l'autre; de sorte que cette constance n'est qu'une inconstance arrêtée et renfermée dans un même sujet' (N.175).[13] This maxim quite explicitly concerns the concept of a single subject (one substance) to which many accidents, in the scholastic sense of secondary or unnecessary qualities, are attached. It is not per se related to the *doppelgänger* idea. But taken with the immediately following maxim (in the 1678 edition), we can see La Rochefoucauld opening up the possibility that the person we love is simply a whole succession of persons at different moments: 'Il y a deux sortes de constance en amour: l'une vient de ce que l'on trouve sans cesse dans la personne que l'on aime (comme dans une source inépuisable) de nouveaux sujets d'aimer, et l'autre vient de ce qu'on se fait un honneur de tenir sa parole' (N.177). Taken along the diachronic axis, each time we feel love for the 'same' person, we are actually loving one of a series of clones. La Rochefoucauld here emphasizes the perception of the other as love object of an inconstant *moi*, but anyone who experiences being an object of love, following La Rochefoucauld's insight, must realize that he or she is loved only as one variant of a proliferating identity which is largely out of the control of the self. Yet in the *Maximes* there are also comments about the way the *moi*, aware of the discrepancy between its inside and its outside, tries — rather desperately, perhaps — to shape that outside. Hence the comment that sincerity itself, which in a naïve description would be the elimination of the difference between the inside and the outside of the self, is usually one of the most refined manifestations of the separation of *moi* for the *moi* and the *moi* as the-other-of-another: 'La sincérité est une naturelle ouverture de cœur. On la trouve en fort peu de gens; et celle qui se pratique d'ordinaire n'est qu'une fine dissimulation pour arriver à la confiance des autres' (N.62).[14]

It is interesting to see the way in which the loss of self-identity, the conviction that one lives a hopeless disconnection between the 'real' self and the 'false' self that is perceived by others, links *Zayde* to widespread concerns of the early modern period, but within Lafayette's novel itself there is one of the best examples of a fear of the self-as-other that actually results in the deliberate creation of a *doppelgänger.* A character of the novel whom Consalve incorrectly at a certain time perceives as the dreaded double is an Arab prince named Alamir, prince de Tarse. Oddly enough, despite a radically different temperament (Alamir is perpetually unfaithful and is a serial seducer and lover of many women while Consalve is the very paradigm of the monogamous male), these two important male figures share a fundamental goal: each wishes to be loved for *himself*, for his actual *moi*, and each feels that the women who love him do so for reasons of his accidental qualities rather than for his substantial being.

Alamir justifies his fickleness by arguing that women do not love him for himself. Of one lover he tells a confidant, 'Naria croyait m'aimer [...] mais elle aimait mon rang, et celui où je pouvais l'élever. Je n'ai trouvé que de la vanité et de l'ambition dans toutes les femmes; elles ont aimé le Prince, et non pas Alamir. Vous verrez [...] que je ne serais pas incapable d'aimer fidèlement, si je pouvais trouver une personne qui m'aimât sans connaître ce que je suis' (p. 208). The grammatical and semantic nuance is subtle but telling: *ce que je suis* is opposed to *qui je suis*, as the accidental, outward appearance to the essential, inward being. At the same time we can suspect that Alamir himself engages in the fantasy of a self that would be different from the self that he actually knows from experience, since he has never loved but only simulated the appearance of loving ('il ne cherchait que le plaisir d'être aimé; celui d'aimer lui était inconnu'; p. 202). Perhaps paradoxically — in view of the vernacular that we use for relations between the genders — Alamir has only experienced the pleasure of being an *object* of love but never the *subject* of love. Instead, he has mastered the art of creating an external persona 'Alamir, Prince de Tarse' who portrays convincingly a besotted lover, while his *moi* remains unmoved and calculating. This external character, in his view, is the object of the love of a series of women; hence his *moi* has really neither been the object nor the subject of love.

He tries to change this situation by creating his own *doppelgänger*, that is, by spinning off the persona 'Alamir, Prince de Tarse' onto another body because 'il voulut voir s'il serait véritablement aimé sans le secours de sa naissance' (p. 214). He concludes that a young woman named Elsibery does love him 'pour l'amour de lui-même' but is still haunted by the idea that if she had the opportunity to choose between himself and the Prince de Tarse, she would choose the latter (p. 220).

Alamir discovers, however, that once a double has been unleashed, it is not possible to control it, and the actions of this other self endanger Elsibery's love for the disguised Alamir. He tries to get out of the difficulty by declaring his identity as Alamir to Elsibery:

> elle avait le plaisir d'avoir persuadé son attachement à Alamir sans le connaître pour le Prince: enfin elle était dans une joie que son cœur était à peine capable de contenir. Elle la laissa voir tout entière à Alamir; mais cette joie lui fut suspecte: il crut que le Prince de Tarse y avait part (p. 225)

Her joy at the discovery of the lengths to which her lover had gone to assure that their love for one another was on a firm foundation and to find that he was not unfaithful (as the reports about the false Alamir had led her to believe) is so apparent to Alamir that he believes that this new intensity of Elsibery's joy can only be due to the knowledge that he is the Prince de Tarse. As a consequence, Alamir finds himself exactly in the same situation in which we saw Consalve. Every manifestation of affection, every gesture, every glance in his direction becomes a betrayal ('ce redoublement d'amour lui parut une infidélité, et lui causa le même chagrin que la diminution lui en aurait dû causer'; p. 225), and his own passion for Elsibery declines.

The problem Alamir tries to solve by creating his double is the problem that Pierre Nicole describes in his essay 'De la connaissance de soi-même' (1675). We cannot see ourselves and we cannot trust what we hear other people say to us about ourselves, particularly if we are powerful. Alamir does not trust what people say about him to himself, particularly women, because he suspects that they flatter him. For Nicole this is part of the schism between the *moi* and the image of the self that is perceptible only from the outside, that is, to other people, who form what Nicole calls 'portraits':

> pour mieux comprendre encore de quelle sorte l'homme pourrait être forcé de se voir lui-même par les objets qui sont hors de lui, et ce qu'il fait pour s'en garantir, il faut considérer qu'il ne se regarde pas moins selon un certain être qu'il a dans l'imagination des autres, que selon ce qu'il est effectivement, et qu'il ne forme pas seulement son portrait sur ce qu'il connaît de soi par lui-même, mais aussi sur la vue des portraits qu'il en découvre dans l'esprit des autres.[15]

From Nicole's account of the proliferation of these 'portraits' — our own imaginary self-representation, the image that flatterers give *to* us, the image that the same flatterers give *of* us when we cannot hear them — we would be lucky simply to have a double, since these images proliferate into the triples, the quadruples, and so on.

This use of the metaphor 'portrait' leads us to a second line of inquiry in regard to *Zayde*, the question of what a portrait actually was, in the practice of the time. The dictionaries of the time contain definitions like these: 'Image, ressemblance d'une personne, par le moyen du pinceau, du burin, du crayon [...]. On appelle *Portrait flatté*, Un portrait qui diminuë les defauts du visage, Et, *Portrait changé*, Un portrait qui les augmente' (*Académie*, 1694). The standard of resemblance in portraiture shifted in the Renaissance to something close to our recent expectations of a 'realistic' physical likeness, but historians of visual portraiture remind us that this form of likeness was not always the norm.[16] The first individual portrait in the modern world is sometimes said to be the picture of Laura that Petrarch had painted by Simone Martini, in 1336, but, writes one scholar, in order to be faithful to Laura's celestial spirit the painter had to be 'del tutto infedele rispetto alla sua vera immagine fisica, quale poteva essere percepita dagli uomini' ['completely unfaithful with regard to her true physical image, as people could see it'].[17] Nonetheless, the idea of an individual painting of a person other than a saint, a king, or a hero was in itself an innovation. In painting such important persons whose name was known to the public, there was no need for the painter to actually see the person depicted, since it was enough for the visual scene of the painting to contain symbols permitting the identification, as in the long tradition of hagiographical imagery. It suffices to portray Saint Anthony Abbot with his crutch and with flames under his feet, or Saint Barbara with the three-windowed tower and a peacock feather. Even when the painting devoted much care to minute depiction of the physical traits of a living human being, this accurate depiction may not be enough to allow us to speak of a 'portrait' in the modern sense. Albrecht Dürer is said to have paid a ninety-three-year-old man to pose for his image of Saint Jerome (1514), but if the engraving is to be read as an image of Saint Jerome it ceases to be a 'portrait'.[18]

Here, then, we already see a problem of doubles appearing, though not doubles in the sense of a visual echo; rather, there is a split between the visual content of the painting or engraving and the semiological use, the image-act so to speak (to appropriate the concept of a speech act) that is made as soon as the painting is put into circulation and titled or captioned. The term 'caption' itself, meaning the title or label appended to an image, is telling: it is as if the image needed to be caught or held still so that its multiplicity of meanings would not spin it out of control. Historians of portraiture tell us that at the beginning of the fifteenth century an increasing number of images of nameless individuals begin to appear, individuals whose images did not contain conventional symbols or physical characteristics typing them so that they could be placed within a received individual identity.[19] It is presumed that these paintings were made for intimates of the person represented and that this familiarity prompted a certain kind of realism: 'Nomi e ruoli in quel mare contano poco o niente; conta una piccola, adorata imperfezione fisica; conta un gesto, un'espressione degli occhi' ['Names and roles in that mass count for little or nothing; what counts is a small, beloved, physical imperfection; what counts is a gesture, an expression of the eyes'].[20] One such portrait is an engraving of Justus Lipsius made presumably for the scholar himself in 1587: 'En la estampa no aparece el nombre de la persona retrata, tan sólo su edad y su lema personal, lo que indica bien a las claras que se distribuiría de manera exclusiva entre destinatarios elegidos personalmente por el gran estudioso' ['in the print the name of the person portrayed is not given, only his age and his personal device, all of which shows that the print was disseminated exclusively among those chosen personally by the great scholar'].[21] In *Zayde*, Consalve's portrait is of this type. It is made for private purposes and it represents someone without individualizing symbols that place the person within a grid of publicly known references. It is the sort of painting that would appear in our museums with a title such as 'Portrait of a young gentleman in

Moorish costume'. The playful costuming of individuals was not meant to identify the person depicted because their identity would never be in question within the circle of people who would see the painting — Roman or mythologizing costume was not uncommon.

The problem begins when a portrait intended for one circle of distribution found its way into another; from being an identifiable private object it fell into circulation among unknown people who did not know for whom the portrait was made, indeed did not necessarily perceive it as a 'portrait' in the sense that it represented an actual individual. It became neither entirely identifiable as Consalve nor entirely separable from him since it contained his physical likeness. However, the transfer of the painting from family possession into a process of market exchange meant that, from the originating and controlling *oikos* in which the father possessed a likeness of his children and could display them with pleasure as *his* ('Il était touché plus qu'aucun père ne l'a jamais été de la beauté de ses enfants; et en tirait une vanité, qu'on pouvait appeler une faiblesse dans un homme comme lui'; p. 76), the picture moved into a system of exchange in which portrait and gesture of identification were separated. To further complicate matters in *Zayde* this theoretically sharp boundary between the portrait as true likeness (as reference) and the portrait or rather picture as decorative and saleable object is blurred by the fact that both in the context of Consalve's family and in the context of Zayde's family the aesthetic at least partially supersedes the referential function. The Moorish costume of the young man in the painting causes a great deal of confusion because Zayde, like her father and Albumazar, assume that the costume really signifies that the man who wears it is a Moor; but the painter had no such referential intent. Consalve's father had the painting made 'par un excellent peintre qui avait voyagé par tout le monde, et à qui les habillements d'Afrique avaient paru si beaux qu'il les donnait à tous ses portraits' (pp. 263–64). This emphasis on the aesthetic rather than on the referential value of the image continues when Zayde's father comes into possession of the painting. He keeps it not because he recognizes the young man in the image but simply as a beautiful object (asked about the painting Zayde's father tells her 'qu'il ne savait point pour qui ce portrait avait été fait; qu'il l'avait acheté de quelques soldats; et qu'il le conservait pour sa beauté'; p. 235). In short, the referential and the aesthetic aspects of the image become hopelessly confused and cannot, it seems, be controlled other than by spoken language.

Here we come to the last thread that we will discuss here, one that ties the other two together: the problem of language as logocentric or even phonocentric. In the basic sense already mentioned, this view of communication sets human speech (a person present to another person in a specific moment and speaking) above all representation of that speech in written form. One could no doubt make an extension of this argument to claim that the drawn, painted, or engraved image is an inferior substitute for the 'real' thing represented. If there is a *logos* there is someone who utters the word, and therefore logocentrism supposes a subject, a subject who is *one* and authentic and present to himself.

The double is a phenomenon that arises within logocentrism, since the 'double' requires the original one — or the assertion of an original one — in order to be a double. As one critic has summarized the anti-logocentric position: 'Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault often argue against a logic based upon binarity in which the first term is hierarchically privileged over the second in such pairings as good–evil, being–nothingness, presence–absence, man–woman, and soul–body; the second term in these instances is regarded as "the negative, corrupt, undesirable version of the first, a fall away from it".'[22] We can see why Consalve is eager to reclaim the integrity and uniqueness of his identity, to assert the exclusive reality of his presence and his *moi* once Zayde has begun to see him, as he understands it, only as the 'portrait' of someone else. Consalve's case is not, however, the most familiar narrative of the *doppelgänger*, one, in which there would be another 'Consalve' laying claim to his family, to his valorous deeds, and to his inheritance, taking over his house, and so on. Instead, it is only through and by reference to Zayde that he believes that his identity has been stolen from him. In other words — and this is an important though easily overlooked fact — love itself is promoted in *Zayde* as it is in other works by Lafayette as the crucial force for arriving at a subjective sense of identity. For other people, Consalve is simply Consalve (for our immediate purposes it will not be necessary to deal with the complicating factor of his use of an assumed name, 'Théodoric', a device that is little exploited within the plot), but for Consalve he has been reduced to the status of the double of someone else, someone who has both a temporal and an affective priority in Zayde's life.

When it is finally established that the man in the portrait is indeed Consalve, all would seem to return to the proper and fully logocentric framework. After all, it does require that Consalve be present, that Zayde's father and she be present and that *viva voce* testimony is given and received face to face to certify that there can be no doubt that the portrait is the portrait of Consalve and of no one else. Consalve is therefore the *original*; the painting is a copy of his likeness; and the human *doppelgänger* is a cousin of his to whom Albumazar the astrologer mistakenly assigned this likeness. Zayde's father had hatched the plan to have his daughter marry the Prince de Fez but had never seen this prince. It was Albumazar who identified the image in the painting as being that of the Prince de Fez. In other words, all converges in the concluding pages of the novel to guarantee that it is Consalve's image in the portrait and no one else's. This is important, since he is not the 'portrait' of a man Zayde loves; rather, Zayde is in love with the man whose likeness is in the painting.[23] Moreover, there may be semi-concealed allusion by the author of the romance to undermine further in a humorous way the authority of the astrologer, who in a certain sense stole Consalve's likeness by stating that the portrait was that of the Prince de Fez. 'Albumazar' is the westernized form of the name of Ja'far ibn Muhammad Abu Ma'shar al-Balkhi, a celebrated ninth-century mathematician and astrologer. Albumazar's fame as astrologer had already made itself known in literature. Giambattista della Porta had written the play *Lo Astrologo* (1606) and Thomas Tomkis wrote a comedy, *Albumazar*, performed at Cambridge in Trinity College, in 1614. John Dryden wrote a prologue for a 1668 London revival of Tomkis's play, two years before the publication of Lafayette's *Zayde*. In Tomkis's play, as in della Porta's, Albumazar is represented as a fraud.[24]

In order to appreciate the correct assignment of the portrait to Consalve and to restore to him the entire authenticity and undivided self that he lacked for much of the story, and to allow him the pleasure of being seen by Zayde as himself and not as the representation of someone else, it seems that one must be happily logocentric and believe in the precedence of the spoken word and self-presence over graphic representations that are so apt to go astray. Given what art historians tell us about the fashion of producing portraits without names attached and without symbolism that would permit the individual depicted to be identified in the public sphere, we can see that such portraits depended on *presence* to guarantee intelligibility. The portrait could be appreciated in the presence of the person portrayed, could be displayed by a family member to others, and there would be no rupture in the chain of possession. The intelligibility of the painting would not be in the painting itself but in the context and usage of an oral and gestural tradition. With the end of *Zayde* it seems that that tradition has been fully validated.

And yet, this happy ending might not have happened if it were not for the *doppelgänger* with its subversion of logocentrism, that is of immediacy and presence. Would Zayde have fallen in love with Consalve if he had not resembled this entirely imaginary being whom we could call Consalve II or Consalve-Prince-de-Fez or Consalve the Muslim? What made Consalve stand out from other men in a way that won Zayde's love? One consistent thread in the perceptions of her love for Consalve — an explanatory thread that runs consistently from the early moments when Consalve largely misunderstands Zayde's attitude towards him all the way through the final retrospective explanations given at the end of the story — is the idea that Zayde is interested in him because he looks like someone who has great importance in her own account of her affective life. In other words, it seems from very early in the interaction of Zayde and Consalve that he interests her because of his resemblance to someone else. Her attraction to him is, as he perceives it, mediated through the concept of an absent other. He believes that she loves this other man (so he understands it) and that her love for the absent other takes precedence over her love for him. We recognize here a form of the mimetic desire that René Girard has described so influentially.[25] However, this is a very unusual case of the mimetic triangle. In its simplest form, two persons — most of Girard's examples place men in this situation — love a third person, a woman. And the two men believe that they love the woman because she is intrinsically highly desirable, whereas (from Girard's critical point of view) the woman has been designated as desirable by the first of the two men, the mediator. Thus Consalve could fall in love with Zayde if he saw that his friend Alphonse was attracted to her, but Consalve would deny the imitative motive of his love. This is the common configuration that we are accustomed to finding in novels and plays. In *Zayde*, however, Consalve is not only unaware of a mimetic motive in his love for Zayde but he is completely unfamiliar with the nature and existence of the mediator-rival.[26] However, the very idea that Zayde is loved by another and that she actually loves this other, may be enough to designate her as desirable. In other words, Consalve's love for Zayde may from its inception be mediated, though — and this is a variation on Girard's basic insight — it may not be caused by that mediation. Instead, love itself may, so to speak, generate mediation. This is implied by the comment by Alphonse quoted a moment ago: ‘on est jaloux sans sujet [...] quand on est bien amoureux. [... L]a jalousie vous a fait imaginer, qu’elle pleure un amant, plutôt qu’un frère (p. 111). There is a remark by Girard that is especially pertinent: ‘The triangle of desire is an isosceles triangle. Thus desire always increases in intensity as the mediator approaches the desiring subject’ — and the more the subject and the mediator resemble one another the greater the violence of their hatred for one another.[27] This is why fraternal rivalry is so bitter and why the very existence of twins is, according to this doctrine, so dangerous.[28] In Consalve’s case he — through the perception of his own face and body — is his own rival. All the more reason to understand the pathos of Consalve’s own self-hatred since he feels he is most absent from Zayde when he is in her presence (and she is perceiving him simply as a graphic representation of his rival) and he feels therefore that his presence has been emptied.

If we can argue that Consalve’s reduction to the status of a graphic representation, a portrait, actually causes his love for Zayde, it is even easier to make the case that Zayde’s love for Consalve is mediated by a form of ‘writing’ — the form of the portrait. Hers is a still more complicated case since she has no rival for Consalve’s love. The Girardian model is less helpful, though one of its terms is still useful, with a distinction. There is a mediating function — *une instance médiatrice* — of Zayde’s love but the author seems to have deliberately avoided making this mediator a single person. Instead, the father, the astrologer, and the portrait itself seem to designate the likeness of Consalve as the likeness of the man she will marry. Albumazar, seeing Zayde looking at a portrait of a young man of an exceptional beauty,

> lui dit qu’il voyait bien qu’un homme qui ressemblerait à ce portrait pourrait espérer de lui plaire. Comme les Grecs ont une grande opinion de l’astrologie, et que les jeunes personnes ont une grande curiosité de l’avenir, Zayde pria plusieurs fois ce fameux astrologue de lui dire quelque chose de sa destinée [...] elle le pressa plus fortement qu’elle n’avait encore fait, de consulter les astres sur sa Fortune. ‘Il n’est pas nécessaire que je les consulte, lui dit-il, en souriant, pour vous assurer, madame, que vous êtes destinée à celui dont Zuléma vous a fait voir le portrait. Peu de Princes dans l’Afrique peuvent s’égaler à lui; vous serez heureuse si vous l’épousez; prenez garde de laisser engager votre cœur à quelque autre. [...]’ (p. 236)

Zayde is thenceforth controlled by the painting. Here is how her friend Félime describes Zayde’s encounter with Consalve:

> En regardant le plus jeune de ces Espagnols, qui s’appelait Théodoric, elle s’aperçut qu’il ressemblait à ce portrait qu’elle avait trouvé si agréable: cette ressemblance la surprit, et le lui fit regarder avec plus d’attention. (pp. 238–39)

The image is not a neutral representation but actually modifies Zayde’s way of looking at the world. According to Félime, Zayde pays more attention to the young Spanish man *because* of the resemblance. Having thus been attracted to Consalve (alias ‘Théodoric’), Zayde also generates an imaginary rival of her own just as Consalve did (‘elle s’imagina qu’il avait quelque autre passion qui le rendait malheureux. Cette pensée lui donna un trouble et un chagrin qui la surprirent, et qui la rendirent aussi mélancolique que Théodoric le lui paraissait’; p. 239). Félime describes the relation between the image and the actually present hero, showing that for Zayde the causal sequence is entirely confused:

> Jusques ici, répliqua Zayde, je n'avais point pris les paroles d'Albumazar pour une véritable prédiction; mais je vous avoue que depuis que j'ai vu Théodoric, elles ont commencé à me faire de l'impression dans l'esprit. Il m'a paru extraordinaire d'avoir trouvé un homme qui ressemble à ce portrait, et d'avoir senti de l'inclination pour lui. Je suis surprise quand je pense qu'Albumazar m'a défendu de laisser engager mon cœur; il me semble qu'il prévoyait les sentiments que j'ai pour Théodoric; et sa personne me plaît d'une telle sorte, que si je suis destinée à un homme qui lui ressemble, ce qui devrait faire mon bonheur va faire le malheur de ma vie. Mon inclination se trompe à cette ressemblance: elle me porte à celui à qui je ne dois pas être, et me prévient peut-être d'une telle sorte, que je ne pourrai plus aimer celui qu'il faudra que j'aime. (p. 240)

One of the characteristics of logocentrism that is frequently mentioned (or, rather, denounced, since one generally speaks of logocentrism only to denounce it) is its claim to identify origins and to distinguish between the origin and the original, on one hand, and the replica, sign, or copy on the other.[29] In this passage we can see the troubled relationship between the hero as present and the image of the hero from the point of view of Zayde. It is not simply that her feelings toward Consalve come from having seen his image in the painting; seeing Consalve modifies her view of the painting and its significance. There is both forward-working and backward-working causality. It is only after seeing Consalve that she takes Albumazar's words seriously. But it is also because of Albumazar's words that she takes Consalve seriously. Moreover, in terms of the concept of mediated desire, we can see how complicated Zayde's feelings are. If the complex father-astrologer-portrait designates Consalve as desirable to Zayde with the imperative that she *must* love the man whose image is in the portrait, the very same complex, conceived as a mediating instance, *prohibits* love for someone who merely *resembles* the man in the portrait. Zayde herself is seized with the logic of the double insofar as this phenomenon, this visual entity, is split in two by the graphic instance (the 'writing' in Derrida's terms) of the portrait. However, in prohibiting this love, the mediation simply — within the universe of Lafayette's novels — makes Consalve more desirable, so much so that Zayde's only recourse is to flee the unbearable and irresistible presence of this man ('Il n'y a point de remède [...] pour éviter tous ces malheurs, que d'abandonner un lieu où je cours tant de périls, et où même la bienséance ne nous permet pas de demeurer'; p. 240).

The conclusion of Lafayette's romance, as of all romances, brings about the union of the lovers and the removal of the obstacle. The term 'aspirationally logocentric' is appropriate to describe this conclusion insofar as it is only the presence, the voice, of father, hero, and heroine that brings about the end of the scission between *moi* and *autre*, appearance and being, the real self and the double and brings under control once more the powerful, disruptive graphic representation. Along the way, however, we see how written and painted representations, 'dangerous supplements', are likely to go astray.[30]

Notes to Chapter 8

1. Edgar Allan Poe's story 'William Wilson' appeared in *Burtons' Gentleman's Magazine And American Monthly Review* (Oct. 1839). Jack Finney's novel, *The Body Snatchers*, was serialized in *Colliers Magazine* in 1954 and was the basis of Don Siegal's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) and of Philip Kaufman's remake (1978).
2. Sylvia Plath, *The Magic Mirror: A Study of the Double in Two of Dostoevsky's Novels* (Rhiwargor, Llanwddyn, Powys: Embers Handpress, 1989).
3. References to Lafayette's text are taken from Marie-Madeleine de Lafayette, *Zayde*, ed. by Camille Esmein-Sarrazin (Paris: Flammarion, 2006). Quotations in English will be from Nicholas Paige's translation, *Zayde: A Spanish Romance* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006). One study that does deal explicitly with the double in *Zayde* is Alexandre Albert-Galtier, 'Alamir ou le double travesti dans Zaïde de Madame de Lafayette', in *Doubles et dédoublement en littérature*, ed. by Gabriel-A. Perouse (Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 1995).
4. Some earlier reflections on the role of pictures in *Zayde* appeared long ago: John D. Lyons, 'Speaking in pictures, speaking of pictures: Problems of Representation in the Seventeenth Century', in *Mimesis: From Mirror to Method*, ed. by John D. Lyons and Stephen G. Nichols (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1982), pp. 166–87 and 'The Dead Center: Desire and Mediation in Lafayette's *Zayde*', *Esprit Créateur* 23.2 (Summer 1983), 58–69.
5. Hélène Merlin-Kajman has studied the difficult boundaries between the *moi* of Balzac the writer and the public to which he addresses himself (*L'Absolutisme dans les lettres et la théorie des deux corps: Passions et politique* (Paris: H. Champion, 2000), pp. 256–60). See also Mathilde Bombart, *Guez de Balzac et la querelle des Lettres* (Paris: Champion, 2007).
6. Terence Cave, 'Fragments d'un moi futur', in *Pré-histoires: Textes troublés au seuil de la modernité* (Geneva: Droz, 1999), pp. 111–27 (pp. 114–15).
7. On the problem of definitions of logocentrism see John M. Ellis, *Against Deconstruction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 29–66.
8. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). See also Michael Moriarty, *Fallen Nature, Fallen Selves: Early Modern French Thought II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), especially 'Self-Love and Concupiscence', pp. 157–386.
9. This effect of self-love appears in such writers as Pierre Nicole and François de La Rochefoucauld (see below). Many of Taylor's comments about the world-view of the hyper-Augustinians are pertinent here, including the 'modern sense [...] in which subject and object are separable entities' (p. 188) and that 'theory starts from the individual on his own' separated from nature and from a community (p. 193). Moreover 'words are ultimately given their meaning arbitrarily through definitions', rather than being anchored in a resemblance to the natural world (p. 197). This problematizing of the criterion of resemblance is a crucial feature of *Zayde*.
10. René Descartes, 'Discours de la méthode', in *Œuvres de Descartes*, ed. by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: Vrin, 1996), VI, 1–78 (p. 23).
11. René Descartes, 'Les Méditations métaphysiques de René Descartes touchant la première philosophie', trans. by the Duc de Luynes, in Adam and Tannery (as previous), IX, 1–72 (p. 25).
12. Jean de La Fontaine, *Les Amours de Psyché et de Cupidon* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1991).
13. François de La Rochefoucauld, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by L. Martin-Chauffier and Jean Marchand, Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 426.
14. We should acknowledge that Lafayette's characters are not philosophers. While they are, in a pragmatic way, concerned about their own 'identity' (as we would say), they have not reached the point of abstract reflection at which *moi* becomes a substantive, *le moi*, and thus an object of metaphysical reflection (Cave, p. 119).
15. Pierre Nicole, 'De la connaissance de soi-même', in *Essais de morale*, ed. by Laurent Thirouin (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999), pp. 309–79 (p. 317).
16. Édouard Pommier writes that the portrait based on physical resemblance triumphed completely in the seventeenth century: 'Le portrait est dès lors, et définitivement, réservé à l'image de

l'homme faite à sa ressemblance' (*Théories du portrait de la Renaissance aux Lumières* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), pp. 16–17) and indicates that this shift in the visual arts was linked to the immense prestige of Aristotelian poetics from the mid-sixteenth century (p. 105).

17. Mauro Lucco, 'Viaggio nel ritratto, tra somiglianza e finzione', in *Il Ritratto: Identità e storia*, ed. by Vittoria Coen (Milan: Mazzotta, 2001), pp. 13–21 (p. 14).
18. Lorne Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits: European Portrait-Painting in the 14th, 15th and 16th Centuries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 2.
19. Lucco, p. 17.
20. Lucco, p. 17.
21. Michael Bury, 'Los retratos en estampa en la Europa del Renacimiento', in *El retrato de Renacimiento*, ed. by Miguel Falomir (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado/Ediciones El Viso, 2008), pp. 147–63 (p. 163).
22. Gordon E. Slethaugh, *The Play of the Double in Postmodern American Fiction* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p. 22.
23. Although the arrow of equivalence points necessarily in both directions simultaneously, the fact that the painting was made by an artist who had seen Consalve and worked for Consalve's father gives priority to the latter. The Prince de Fez would seem to have inadvertently borrowed Consalve's image rather than the other way around.
24. Thomas Tomkis, *Albumazar: A Comedy*, ed. by Hugh G. Dick, University of California Publications in English (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1944). It is interesting to note that della Porta was also the author of *De humana physiognomonia libri III* (1586), which was translated into French and published in 1655 in Rouen and in 1660 in Paris, as well as a comedy on rival brothers (*Gli duoi fratelli rivali*). The connection between portraits and sciences of prediction, or astrology, was well established at the time of Lafayette's *Zayde*. In 1658 the French translation of Cardano's work on the subject appeared in Paris (Girolamo Cardano, *La Métoposcopie*, trans. by C. M. de Laurendière (Paris: T. Jolly); reprinted in the series 'Les Recueils d'emblèmes et les traités de physiognomonie de la Bibliothèque interuniversitaire de Lille', facsimile edition (Paris: Aux Amateurs de livres, 1990)).
25. René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, trans. by Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966).
26. Michael S. Koppisch, 'The Dynamics of Jealousy in the Work of Lafayette', *MLN* 94 (1979), 757–73.
27. René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, pp. 83 and 100.
28. René Girard, 'Du désir mimétique au double monstrueux', in *La Violence et le sacré* (Paris: Grasset, 1972), pp. 213–48.
29. Jacques Derrida, 'La Violence de la lettre: De Lévi-Strauss à Rousseau', in *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967), pp. 149–202.
30. Jacques Derrida, quoting Rousseau, in 'ce dangereux supplément', *De la grammatologie*, pp. 203–34.

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